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America's Schools: Portraits and Perspectives

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DÆDALUS

Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences

America's Schools: Portraits and Perspectives

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FALL 1981: AMERICA'S SCHOOLS: PORTRAITS AND PERSPECTIVES

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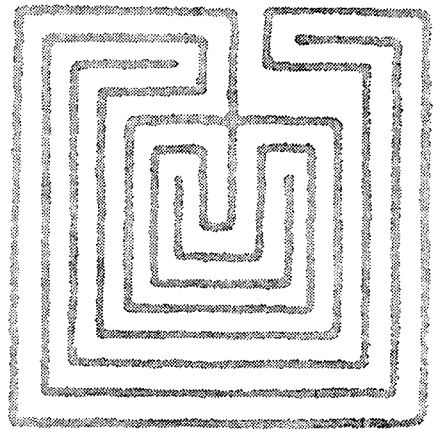

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Preface to the Issue, "America's Schools: Portraits and Perspectives"

THIS IS THE SECOND OF TWO DÆDALUS ISSUES on America's schools, public and private. The two issues ought to be read together; they are intended to complement each other. Indeed, they might have been printed in a single volume had their prospective bulk not made such a solution impractical. Experience over many years has indicated that when *Daedalus* issues exceed a certain size, they receive significantly less attention than volumes of more modest proportions. These considerations alone might have counseled publication in two volumes. There was, however, an even more compelling consideration—cost. To publish almost four hundred pages in a single quarterly issue is to risk incurring expenses greater than can be easily sustained in today's high-price economy. Aesthetic, intellectual, and economic interests, when combined, provide ample rationale for a two-volume publication. Still, this is by no means an ideal solution. Some who approach this *Daedalus* volume without having read the earlier one will miss more than a prologue; they risk missing certain of the principal elements of the story.

Because of the long and detailed preface in the preceding *Daedalus* issue, there is no need to paraphrase here what has already been told. Suffice it to say that many of the authors in the earlier volume, reflecting on the American educational "revolution" of our times—the first serious effort to achieve universal schooling—judge the success of recent policies quite differently. Some, genuinely pleased with the efforts made and the results obtained, are not greatly disconcerted by evidences of declining citizen support for public education; others, more wary about certain recent developments, discover signs that they find positively ominous. Those who feel least sanguine argue that major curricular and other innovations need to be made at once. It is impossible for conditions to continue as they are. The mass media's representations of school conditions, however exaggerated, have clearly had an effect on public opinion; new coalitions, they argue, need to be created to defend the reputation of schools and the inviolability of public education.

Inevitably, schools are compared—school climates are analyzed—and an effort is made to explain why and how one ethos comes to prevail in certain schools while another, substantially different, tends to prevail in others. Fundamental issues are not skirted: the efficiency of teachers; the role of principals; the power of outside constituencies, including parents; the authority of law; the importance of tradition; the weight of prejudice; the significance of class and race; the mores of the young; the memories of the old. Politics figures prominently; so, also, does the economy. All are recognized to have relevance to why the schools appear as they do, and what those inside and outside feel about them.

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If all these matters have indeed been addressed, analyzed, and reflected on, what remains to be said? What, in short, is the rationale for the second *Daedalus* issue? Three interests explain it. First, the earlier issue dealt overwhelmingly with public schools; the private sector, by comparison, was neglected. While our concern is not principally to redress the balance, to give "equal time" to the private or "independent" schools, their role in American education today calls for sympathetic and critical scrutiny. A *Daedalus* issue on America's universities that neglected to treat private institutions would be thought woefully incomplete; a comparable argument can be made with respect to America's schools.

A second, not wholly unrelated theme has to do with the extent to which research on schools is today dominated by purely statistical concerns. We want to know how many students attend, where they go, what the racial mix is, what is studied, how many graduate, what follows, and how all this compares to the situation thirty, fifty, or a hundred years ago. The statistics thought to be significant will necessarily change over time, but the interest in numbers seems to be constant. There is substantially less scholarly interest in describing or analyzing what goes on in the individual school, let alone in the individual classroom. Those who conduct research on these matters—and there are some who do—belong to a distinct minority. Many of their fellow researchers, opting for what they regard as the more precise methods of the social sciences, are critical of work that strikes them as impressionistic and subjective. They argue as if the "statistical" approach guarantees at least a minimal objectivity—assuming always that the experimental design is valid—but that the other, more discursive approaches, whatever their literary merits, are too vague and imprecise, in a word, too "unscientific."

Differences of this kind are not easily resolved. Still, it may be legitimate to ask whether many of the more "scientific" approaches do not carry their own specific bias, with values insinuating themselves as frequently in so-called objective study as in the somewhat more self-conscious explorations that depend on personal observation, narrative, and small-scale analysis. Ideological and political preference may be more artfully concealed in the former than in the latter, but both are rarely wholly value-free or neutral.

One of the more distinctive features of this *Daedalus* issue is the collection of "portraits" of individual schools—exemplary schools, thought to be excellent by many who know them. While these "representations" are intended to reflect faithfully an objective reality that exists in the United States today, and not only in the eyes of the beholder, no effort is made to conceal or deny the particular intellectual, social, and moral preferences of those who have constructed these word pictures. The term "portrait" is a meaningful one; the "artist" is as much a presence in these portraits as are the schools themselves.

Finally, mention ought to be made of the fact that this issue, like the one that preceded it, includes "testimony," particularly from those who work in schools, who have responsibilities for them. The importance of these contributions needs scarcely to be dwelled on. While they are necessarily subjective, they reflect experience and perspective that needs to be taken into account. To imagine that schools are discrete entities that operate by uniform social laws, and that the discovery of these "laws" is the first purpose of educational inquiry, is to make a fundamental error. Many different kinds of data need to be looked

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for by those concerned to describe and interpret America's schools. Indeed, the "archives" for such inquiry await creation; they are not already in place, catalogued, and stored in buildings that call themselves education libraries. The "perspectives" of those who know schools well—having daily familiarity with them and their student and teacher populations—have a unique authority; they wait to be used.

William Oates opens the issue with an essay that deals principally with the private schools. Remarking on how recent events have conspired to draw attention to these schools, he cites the changed political climate—discussed also by many who wrote for the earlier *Daedalus* issue—and reflects on the interest and controversy generated by James Coleman's recently published "Public and Private Schools." That document, with its explicit accolades for what private schools are managing to do in maintaining high academic performance by students, has been interpreted by many as an "unfair criticism" of public schools, committed to a more exacting mission, the education of all who seek admission. How is it possible, some ask, to compare schools able to select their students and those legally committed to taking all? Many who feel a deep commitment to public education, to the equality that public schools are intended to protect, find Coleman's public and private school comparisons invidious; they are made no happier by the fact that Coleman's findings are today being used by politicians and others to support various educational voucher and tuition-tax-credit schemes. To all such criticism, Coleman himself responds simply: My data are open for all to examine. If they are inaccurate, show their inaccuracies; if none exist, why do they not demonstrate what my colleagues and I have claimed for them?

William Oates shows no particular interest in entering into this particular controversy, perhaps intuiting correctly the deep passions raised by it that do so much to inhibit sober discussion. His interest, in any case, goes well beyond the Coleman report. Remarking on the fact that Coleman's data constitute "the most extensive review of private schools ever undertaken," Oates asks, in effect, why there has been such an obvious neglect in the study of twenty thousand schools, more than 18 percent of all schools, which together enroll over 10 percent of all elementary and secondary schools students, employ 275,000 teachers, and expend something over $4 billion a year. Why, in short, has private education never been adequately studied? Why do the most grotesque caricatures continue to circulate about the social and economic character of their student populations, their educational philosophies and purposes, and the motivations of parents who choose them for their children? Even the term *private* has certain dark connotations, suggesting exclusion and nondemocratic preferences, and *nonpublic* is not a very felicitous or meaningful term. Oates explains why many private schools choose to call themselves "independent schools." That term, he explains, emphasizes their principal quality.

Independent schools are required to decide on their precise objectives, pursuing them always with the understanding that their own freedom depends on being able to maintain the support of their major constituencies—parents, alumni, teachers, and students. These must believe in the school's purposes; they must believe in the school's ability to teach in the way that it claims. Although others may help—private corporations, foundations, and the like—if

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constituency support founders, the school will fail; it will close its doors. In recent decades, when the public schools of the country have been pushed in one way or another, the private schools have not been immune to many of the same pressures; they have felt obliged to reconsider their educational purposes, reformulate their curricula, respond to new social demands. Independence, Oates argues, carries many advantages, not the least being the "possibility of failure as well as the possibility of success." The private schools, in short, are peculiarly vulnerable; no law guarantees their survival. This perpetual risk of failure may provide such schools with much of the élan that so many of them are said to show. The educational curriculum they choose, the faculty they appoint, the rules they establish for student conduct, the graduation requirements they impose—all are largely in their keeping. Private schools may reveal greater or lesser imagination in all these things, but it is obvious that they are free in a way that public schools cannot be. There is a price, however, for such freedom—private schools are held accountable for their mistakes; their reputations will to a significant extent be decided by the judgment of others. These schools have their "publics"; the views of their supporters must be taken into account.

Oates, commenting on the independent schools of the country, refuses to characterize them principally in terms that dwell on class or race. While religion may be a more defining characteristic of such schools, even in this area too many stereotypes are common. Thus, for example, in analyzing how the Catholic schools in America have changed in recent decades, it is as important to consider the consequences of inflation, population movement, and teacher availability, and how these have affected opinion in the large "community" that supports Catholic education, as it is to think in terms that are wholly doctrinal or moral. Oates, aware that private academies have often been founded in recent years in the South to avoid desegregation decrees, knows that many survive and prosper for this reason only. Yet he is not led to extrapolate from this, to equate "fundamentalism" with "racism," or to imagine that all Southern flight from public education is based simply on a wish to get away from blacks. There is, he knows, a pervasive concern among many parents with the mores and habits of their children; this often accompanies a deep distrust of what are taken to be the "values of the 1960s." Many parents who choose private schools for their children believe, rightly or wrongly, that their children stand a better chance of being protected against certain hazards in private schools than in public schools. These parents are responding in many instances to the private schools' insistence that the behavior of students concerns them, and that they intend to exercise authority in that sphere.

Oates knows that there are many excellent private schools but that not all can be so denominated. He also knows that private schools today are enjoying the reputation of being "successful." This is another way of saying that parents appear to be prepared to make some sacrifice to send their children to these schools, in effect, accepting Coleman's major conclusion—that the private schools are performing well. Given the choice, many are opting for this solution.

Oates suggests that the time has come for a much more serious and substantial study to be made of the administration of the independent schools. His concern is not with accounting procedures or budgeting decisions; he is not

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thinking in these bureaucratic categories. His proposal is substantially more radical. Oates is looking for more self-consciously "political" studies of these schools. He is asking, in effect, whether the independent schools have not frequently been led by individuals who have understood the necessity of developing and sustaining support. Their concern has been to find, create, or keep a "public"; they have had to know how to build a consensus for their educational objectives.

This, he suggests, has never been easy; it is not easy today. Scholars, he believes, have paid far too little heed to either the efforts made or the accomplishments realized. Unwittingly, perhaps, they have assumed that independent schools live in a world apart and that their experience is irrelevant to public schools. Too few have understood the nature of the independent schools' real accomplishment, let alone the basis of their success: to provide services that are prized and wanted and that reflect the wishes of several constituencies—internal and external—on which the school depends. Private schools, like public schools, live by consent; they require leadership capable both of shaping and maintaining such consent.

Those who participated in the continuing *Daedalus* seminar on America's schools accepted from the beginning that we wanted to avoid, to the greatest extent possible, the topics that have been rendered stale by too much mass media attention. No one, for example, believed that another study of "the failure of America's schools" would serve any purpose; indeed, some argued that such characterization only revealed a major misperception of what was in fact occurring in schools. Rather than embark on new studies of "failing schools," the suggestion was made that a serious effort be made to investigate a number of very different schools that are thought to be succeeding. The purpose of the exercise would not be to publish elaborate "puffs" on individual schools, which would then be offered as models for emulation. Instead, we assumed that such an effort would encourage the development of procedures for judging the objectives that schools strive for, the success they realize, the failure they court, and the consequences of each. We expected to learn a certain amount about the schools themselves, but took for granted that it would probably be even more revealing of the values of those who bear any responsibility for these schools. Did we expect also that it would encourage a more searching inquiry into our own values? It is at this point that opinions diverge. Whatever our original intentions, we know that we set out to gather materials for school portraits; we believe that we have secured these, and, in the process, a good deal else. The exercise has made us acutely conscious of how "political" all schools are, of how much they rely on making sense to their constituencies.

These procedures depended on the willingness of schools to open themselves to our scrutiny. While it might be gratifying for a school to be told that it was being examined precisely because it was thought to be in some way "exemplary," the fact that there was no intention to touch up the portraits, to remove warts or other displeasing features, was also made known. The visits would be brief, three or four days at most. The possibilities of error were substantial. To accept our plea for "visitation rights" was therefore to take a risk. None of the schools were put off by the few "ground rules" that were

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proposed. No promise was given to show the "portraits"—to share the findings—before they were actually in print; no one, except for the authors, meeting with the editors, saw the original manuscripts. The essays express what the three investigators, reflecting on their visits, saw and heard, and what they thought deserved to be recorded and communicated. The names of principal school figures, where easily identifiable, are accurately given; pseudonyms are used only in the case of students, teachers, and others who provided information, and who did so with some expectation that their confidences would be respected.

It is impossible to exaggerate the indebtedness we feel to those who welcomed Sara Lightfoot, Philip Jackson, and Robert Coles. Institutions are not always so accommodating or so willing to expose themselves to the gaze of outsiders. Even the argument that the "interests of scholarship" or of public policy might be served by such inquiry will not always cause institutions to open their doors. The hazards of the enterprise need to be acknowledged. The gratitude of authors and editors needs also to be stated.

Our choice of these particular institutions ought to be explained. We started by agreeing that it would be important to look at one inner-city school, preferably a school that could claim an overwhelmingly black student body. Alonzo Crim, one of our continuing seminar participants, suggested that we give thought to visiting the George Washington Carver School in Atlanta. A rapid examination of other possibilities told us that we would do well to avail ourselves of the opportunity offered. Given the role of William Oates in helping to create the seminar and the experience that many members had in visiting St. Paul's School for a weekend of meetings, the prospect of a closer examination had great appeal. Everyone agreed that at least one of the schools ought to be a private institution. St. Paul's recommended itself, not least to the three investigators who were prepared to undertake the study. Finally, because the group agreed that at least one public suburban school should figure, and that this school, if at all possible, should be outside the East or the South, both Midwestern and Western institutions were looked at. Highland Park High School was chosen from about half a dozen possibilities. We could not have been more fortunate in our choice.

The portraits call for no extensive commentary; indeed, respectful silence would have been my own preferred strategy, had the authors not insisted that my obligations as Editor required that I do more. As the one who first read these essays in draft, who recognized and prized them for their insight and concern, realizing how much they illuminated and made concrete many of the general propositions of this study, each author knows how admiring I am of the effort. Each, however, has also urged me to offer additional observations, to suggest how I read their work.

Little purpose would be served in treating the "portraits" individually. To paraphrase what Sara Lightfoot, Philip Jackson, and Robert Coles have said would only detract from their representations. That the three visited the same schools, each going at a different time and each coming away with distinct impressions, confirms what we already knew—portraits will generally reveal the artist as much as they do the subject. Beyond that, however, the extent of their agreement is impressive. Thus, for example, all discover significance in

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what certain highly placed individuals are able to do in these schools. Without in any way diminishing the weight of opinion, internal or external, they accept the fact that schools are moved by individuals, by those who are constitutionally entrusted with power. Whether these individuals are socialized into their specific roles—or whether they create them for themselves—they appear to make a substantial difference to what goes on within the school. They are neither peripheral nor incidental to the operation, which does not imply that they have a common style, concern themselves with the same things—or with everything—but only that they seem to enjoy their authority, are willing to exercise it, and do not appear unduly alarmed or surprised when they are resisted.

Given the importance of teachers in schools—some would say their absolute centrality—it is striking to note how different are the perceptions of them. These reflect, in part, the kinds of authority the teachers are permitted to exercise, the authority they are subjected to, the freedom they are encouraged to exercise in the classroom and elsewhere, their relations with students, and their own self-knowledge and self-assurance. What subjects are taught, how students regard these subjects, whether they are required or elective, how well the teachers communicate in classroom situations, and their understanding of adolescents all matter profoundly. It is not at all apparent whether their relations with other teachers are very important or whether they learn significantly from them. Indeed, there is little in these portraits to tell us how teachers become proficient in their subjects, whether proficiency is indeed a matter of great moment, or how it is maintained over the years. While the most "privileged" of the schools provides sabbatical leaves for its teachers—a policy not common in many schools today—the importance of such leaves in increasing the possibilities of constant intellectual renewal are not analyzed. How teachers spend their free time—during school vacations and during the summer—is never indicated. Indeed, there is little in these portraits to suggest what the off-duty life of these teachers is like—whether they read, what they read, whether they are active in their communities or elsewhere, what amenities their salaries afford them, whether they travel, and where, why, and with what results, if any, for their teaching. Indeed, we are never told how many (in the public schools) hold other jobs during term time, whether they work during the summer, whether such work involves children principally, what their own family circumstances are like. How many feel (and are) financially secure? How many are divorced, unmarried? How many are heads of single-parent families? What are the ages of their children? Indeed, how many have children of their own? What are their ages? Where are they? What are their occupations? Would knowledge of these things help us to understand the occupational pleasures and hazards of teaching today? To ask these questions is not to indicate any dissatisfaction with the portraits, individually or collectively, but only to point out how much we learn about school "leaders," how little, by comparison, we learn about teachers. We are offered only the most cursory job profiles—enhanced occasionally by narrative that gives detail on individual classroom discussions—but these scarcely suffice to make us aware of what teachers think, let alone know. We learn something about their attitudes toward their superiors, how they feel about their students, and, occasionally, about the

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parents of their students. We know that the teachers in the inner-city Atlanta school do not live in the decaying area around the school—the telephone serving as their chief link with the school and its problems when they return home each day—but we learn little else. The "unfinished" figures in these portraits are principally the teachers. How is such partial portrayal to be explained? Reticence? Lack of interest? By whom? The artist? The subject?

The students, by contrast, are everywhere. They are "principals" in a way that cannot be denied. Their values, beliefs, fears, speech, and behavior are minutely rendered. While the hasty reader, glancing at these profiles, may conclude that the most significant datum is that one of these school populations is overwhelmingly poor, another seemingly rich, the third somewhere between, with affluence (or solid comfort) being its most characteristic feature, the more careful observer will note many more subtle differences: in the anxiety levels that predominate; in the parental involvements that are mentioned; in the rhetoric, "street wisdom," and "social science" jargon that distinguishes one from the other. Those who understand that affinities are not always uncovered where the economic conditions appear most congruent will not be surprised by some of the detail in these portraits. Nor, for that matter, will there be much surprise for those who acknowledge that geography and tradition are vitally important in determining what a community is like, what it believes, how it acts, and, therefore, what its schools express.

Would the Carver ideal, with its implicit and explicit appeals to students who live in a community saturated with religious feeling and religious symbolism, be equally effective in a city that lacked such pervasive attachments? To be explicit, would a black inner-city student population in Chicago respond in the same way to the appeals being made to black youth today in Atlanta? What are the differences between the two cities, between the two student populations? Do they exist principally on the economic level, or must other differences also be noted? What are they? Why are they important?

The same kinds of questions may be asked in respect to the student populations in St. Paul's School and in Highland Park High School. While a detailed prosopographic study of the parents of students in both these schools might reveal significant differences in the professions they follow and the incomes they receive, it is unlikely that these would prove to be very substantial. Yet, from the portraits provided, it is obvious that each school is dominated by a substantially different ethos. Both schools are academically exceptional; the overwhelming majority in each aspire to go to university, and the greatest number will be admitted to distinguished colleges. Each school offers a great choice in its curriculum; each boasts an excellent teaching staff. Why, then, the differences? It cannot be explained simply as the result of one being a public school, the other a private school; one a day school, the other a boarding school. Nor is it at all self-evident that one derives its character from the fact that it recruits its students from a wide geographic area and that the other is essentially, as most schools in America are, a local school.

To say that the schools are different, that their student populations seem to be distinctive, is not to say that one is better than the other, only that the discourse of one seems different from the other, that the preoccupations of the students seem different. How can this be accounted for? Clearly, the students

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are reflecting different value systems, perhaps borrowed from their parents, certainly reinforced by their schools. Again, with all the imprecision of the term, the community, the place, Highland Park, must in some sense be accounted an element in the equation. Those who choose to live there, for whatever reason, appear to communicate both to the schools and to their children a clear preference for certain kinds of achievement, for certain kinds of excellence. These children, when they encounter others in their school who either have little use for these values or who see no way to incorporate these values in their own lives, are confronted with a problem that does not present itself in other communities where such differences are either little noted or not made so much of. The competitiveness of one academically superior school may be more muted in another, or simply take very different forms, with substantially different consequences for the students. Is competition less rife at St. Paul's than at Highland Park? It is impossible to know. None of our "portraits" offers conclusive evidence on this point. It is obvious, however, that if the St. Paul's "community" is not a geographic entity in the way that the other "communities" are, it is nonetheless real, and no less powerful. The isolation of the school, its proximity to many of the elite colleges that its graduates eventually enter, its religious traditions, however modified, may all have some bearing on the way its students express themselves. Still, it is obvious that their concerns are not those of other academically oriented communities, and that while many schools have impressive programs in dance, theater, and the arts—not to speak of superb athletic facilities—these do not, singly or together, create a student opinion, a climate, an ethos.

If those who have authority in Carver view their prime responsibility to be preparing disadvantaged black youths for work—for jobs—and if the Highland Park students are being overwhelmingly prepared for college entrance, with a small minority pursuing more vocational goals, feeling neglected and left out, both portraits provide an image of vocational education that leaves much to be desired. Where vocational education is everything—in the inner-city Atlanta school—its quality is disputed. Where it is the program of a minority only—in surburban Highland Park—it is neither much talked about nor much esteemed. Where high school is the terminal education for the majority, misgivings are expressed about the quality of the curriculum; where it is terminal for only a minority, there is an equal sense of insufficiency in the program. None of the authors explains why America's schools find it so hard to give prestige to those students who choose (or are compelled) to move directly from school to work. None explains why the institution of excellent vocational programs is so difficult.

Each of the portraits—including the one by Robert Coles, which deals only with how students and teachers in the three schools perceive and define character—speaks of tensions and differences. There is no monolithic belief system in any of the schools, yet each seems dominated by an ethos that communicates itself to students and teachers. The three schools are markedly different, and the differences reflect value differences of a fundamental kind. The final essays in the issue carry the observations of two educators, both concerned with schools, but with different kinds of problems. It would be easy to say that Alonzo Crim speaks principally as a black school administrator,

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responsible for the education of poor black children in Atlanta, and that his observations are intended primarily to respond to the problems of that racial minority. Timothy Healy, by comparison, may be seen as a Catholic cleric, seeking principally to remind his readers of the values that certain religious traditions embody, and how such values may be expected to affect teaching. To see the purpose of these essays so narrowly would be to miss the significance of each. Crim's essay, while superficially a report on the local situation in Atlanta, is much more than that. So, also, Healy's essay, while purportedly dealing with private religious schools, principally Catholic, has other, larger purposes as well.

Crim's essay opens with a frank acknowledgement of why he accepted the post of superintendent of schools in Atlanta. He sensed a commitment on the part of the Board of Education to work for desegregation and to improve educational opportunity for students. His talks with business leaders and others in the community told him that they were ready to help achieve such an objective. There was, in short, a constituency waiting to be mobilized for the kinds of purposes he had in mind. He knew, however, that all such help would matter not at all if the students themselves were not moved. He had to make them see why success of a certain kind was possible, and what they would themselves be required to do to realize it. Citizen involvement was essential; town meetings were organized so that the superintendent's purposes might be explained. The objective was precise, simple, and easily explained—to make Atlanta's student achievement levels the same or better than those of the average in the nation. Within three years, conspicuous success could be reported—which did not mean that the larger goals had been achieved, but only that a beginning had been made. Atlanta's school administration was reorganized so that this one task became central. So, also, teachers were required to improve their performance. It was not enough to recommend that they do so; specific programs were instituted to encourage them to become more habituated to cooperating with other teachers, to working in new ways with students. As Crim explains, the purpose was to build "a community of believers," and the effort had to start with students. Unless the students were themselves persuaded that the goals were attainable—and that they had a role in achieving them—success was inconceivable. Parents had also to be involved, working through PTAs and other such organizations. The colleges and universities in the city were also engaged. They, too, were given specific roles. The efforts to involve the business community were no less important. The churches were made aware of what the schools were trying to do, and what they might themselves contribute. Crim's message was simple: "Atlanta's adults care about Atlanta's children. They want them to succeed."

His coalition-building had limited objectives, but these were known and constantly advertised by the mass media. Crim, realizing that some might find his remedies too simple, was not much worried by their skepticism. He writes neither of students nor of pupils—his concern is to save the children. Persuaded that he and his associates are in fact accomplishing that aim, he feels no hesitation in publicizing the fact. Crim, like others around him—including some described in the Carver school portraits—is not afraid to be called a "booster." Indeed, he would probably regard the term as a compliment. For

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him, the "community" is all-important. He refuses to perceive that entity in narrow racial, social, or economic terms. He makes his appeal to the broadest possible constituency, believing that it will agree about an objective that involves raising Atlanta's children's test scores to the average in the nation. For him, achieving consensus is no small matter—it is the essence of educational statesmanship.

Timothy Healy starts from a very different vantage point. His concern is to discover what educational difference it makes for a school or college to profess a belief in God. He starts by accepting that most institutions do not make any such avowal. What about those that do? His interest is neither with the pastoral care nor with the instruction in theology that such schools may choose to offer. Rather, he asks how the curriculum more generally is shaped by religious association. That "contemplation is the highest destiny of man," and that there is a necessary link between learning and conduct, seems so self-evident to Healy that he can imagine no Catholic school or college disputing this. The implications of both are enormous; they guarantee a preference for a certain kind of liberal education; they presume also that students are being prepared for two cities, the city of man and the city of God. Virtue, for those who believe this, is something that can be taught in the classroom. While it is of course conceivable that secular schools will make a comparable commitment to certain moral values, Healy sees them as absolutely central to the mission of schools that have a religious affiliation.

While never pretending that parents choose religious-based schools for their children only so that they are instructed in these and other comparable matters, he knows that many are acutely aware of the importance of such issues. Their concern is to see that their children recognize options—develop sensibilities, make choices—that are not necessarily congruent with those of the larger secular culture. Those who send their children to private schools—particularly those with a religious identity—do so for many reasons; some, at least, choose them out of intellectual and moral conviction. In a time of competing beliefs, where some argue as if all belief can be safely subsumed under the umbrella of a single "civil religion," Healy expresses his doubts. The private schools of the country, in his view, are "prospering" for many reasons; it would be wrong to imagine that part of their success does not derive from the explicit moral and intellectual principles they insist upon. Parents (and students) may choose them precisely because they prefer such principles and values to others.

The essays of both Crim and Healy are central to this *Daedalus* issue; they make concrete the choices that must be made by those who bear any responsibility for schools. There is, obviously, a large black "community" in Atlanta at this time; there is also a larger Atlanta "community," defined neither by race nor class. It matters very much whether a public official constructs his educational strategy to appeal to the first, the second, or both. So, also, with those who insist on believing that religion is fundamental both to morality and to learning. Religious identity may be subordinated to a more universal, more all-embracing identity, or it may be maintained and insisted on. The school that chooses to do the first will certainly be different from the one that opts for the second. It will have a different "public," a different student body, a different support. It will "belong" to a different community. So long as such differences

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are not reflected on, so long as the discussion of schools remains fairly abstract, dwelling principally on whether they are orderly or disordered, successful in dispatching their students to good colleges, or failing in this, strict or permissive, these secondary issues—so popular with the mass media—will dominate all discussion of schooling. Only when there is a more explicit understanding of why certain schools appeal to certain constituencies, of how these constituencies shape the schools, giving them their specific functions and priorities, can we begin to see what kinds of support school administrators can look for, or why teachers remain so often the "invisible" men and women of the educational system. To argue this is not to deny the importance of the size of the public's financial commitment to schools, the weight of legislative acts and judicial opinions that govern educational activities in so many spheres, or the ways in which labor markets, professional traditions, and work practices help to shape schools. Even less does it deny the importance of class or race, not least in shaping public (community) opinion. It simply asserts that these are best seen in a political and social context that is at least willing to entertain the possibility that the schools of the country may accurately reflect the opinion of the country. This is why schools offer such an incomparable resource for those concerned to study contemporary American values, not only of those who are young and venturesome, but also of those who are neither. The follies and failures of schools are visible; there is much else that merits close scrutiny.

Again, as with the first *Daedalus* issue on America's schools, public and private, our indebtedness to St. Paul's School and its Rector, Dr. William Oates, needs to be acknowledged. The support of both has been an incomparable boon to us. To those who opened the doors to the George Washington Carver School, Dr. Alonzo Crim and Dr. Norris Hogans, our sincere thanks; also, to Mr. Robert W. Benson and Mr. Joseph Motyl, who welcomed us to Highland Park High School. Without their cooperation, the portraits in this volume would never have been undertaken. Finally, a word of thanks to all who participated in our continuing seminar—our authors, obviously—but also those named in our Advisory Committee. We are indebted to all of them.

S.R.G.

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WILLIAM A. OATES

Independent Schools: Landscape and Learnings

As part of the changing national mood, the spring of this year saw throughout the country a new interest in private schools and in independent education in general. The arrival of President Reagan in Washington gave new national attention and prominence to the view of conservatives that, in the words of Milton Friedman, "Our problem can't be solved by government. Our problem is government."[1] In schooling, it was said, the only possible alternative to increasingly poor education is greater choice for parents among different schools and types of schools, and some public support through tuition tax credits or vouchers for private schools is therefore needed.

James Q. Wilson, writing at this time of the possibility of the adoption of tuition tax credits, commented that "we still do not know whether it is a workable, or even a sound, idea, but we do know that one cannot seriously discuss public education without considering that idea."[2] Because tuition tax credits would make possible parental choice of school, either public or private, a correct and careful understanding of the nature of private education and the operation of nonpublic schools is needed to inform the developing national policy debate.

It is noteworthy, therefore, and perhaps even extraordinary, to discover that the first *Daedalus* issue of two dedicated to consideration of America's schools, public and private, should devote so little attention to the latter. True, in his preface to that volume the Editor wrote that reports about certain private schools would be included in this, the second issue, accompanying additional information about public schools, as an aid to improving "description and analysis" of American education. And there are occasional references to private education in the first volume, particularly in Gerald Grant's essay. But in large measure, schooling is considered to be *public* schooling. Public education appears to be the principal arena, perhaps the only arena, worthy of careful and sustained review. It is not that the private sector of education is small, so inconsequential as not to be noticed. In 1978, 19,668 elementary and secondary schools were under private control, almost 20 percent of the nation's schools. And 5,078,000 students were taught by 275,000 teachers in these schools, which had total annual expenditures that year of $4.2 billion.

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Yet national attention for private schools *was* coming from several quarters this spring. Secretary of Education Terrel H. Bell, speaking in favor of support for the private education sector through tax credits shortly after his appointment, said, "If we strengthen our private schools and provide some friendly competition and contrast, we may also strengthen our public schools in the process."[3] Bell added: "I would say that private schools are an important part of our total education system," a view not stated often, if ever, by leaders of American public education.

Respect for private education was expressed also by decisions and actions of local public school leaders. A report from *The New York Times* in March of this year, for example, told of the establishment in 1974 of a school, Central Park East, in East Harlem with a "private school approach"—that is, the school offered "innovative programs" while stressing "rigorous standards." Its stated objective was to provide "tough preparation" for entrance to private and specialized high schools. The school, housed in one of East Harlem's public schools, conducted open classrooms, kindergarten through sixth grade, for fifty Hispanic and black children. By March 1981 the school had grown to 210 students, one quarter of whom were white children "voluntarily bused" by parents in carpools from many parts of Manhattan and the Bronx. In response to the overwhelming demand for admission, Central Park East II opened in September 1980. It was housed in another public school and was to be administered according to similar principles.[4]

Such occasional and scattered favorable reports provided a limited introduction for the report "Public and Private Schools,"[5] by James S. Coleman, that caught the attention of the public, educators, politicians, and the media from the moment of its announcement this spring. While acknowledging "that the average private school brings about higher achievement in some cognitive skills than does the average public school," Coleman sought to emphasize "the things about those schools which bring about higher achievement: more homework, fewer absences, less cutting of classes, all by students from comparable backgrounds; and in general a more orderly environment in the school."[6] The conclusions in the report were based on responses to a survey of 58,728 seniors and sophomores in 1,015 public and private high schools. Data assembled for the study constitute the most extensive review of private schools ever undertaken.

Initial criticism of Coleman's report came most vigorously from those who fear national political developments that favor financial support for nonpublic schools through tax credits or vouchers. One educational researcher from the Brookings Institution predicted that, before long, politicians will be "standing on the floor of the Senate, waving this report as evidence of support for tuition tax credits."[7] And a reviewer in *The New York Times*[8] suggested that interpretation of the data in the study reflected a bias in favor of public support for private schools, since Coleman "has publicly favored tuition tax credits since 1978." Coleman responded quickly and pointedly: "I do not favor tuition tax credits. . . . thus I find it very unlikely that I could have 'publicly favored tuition tax credits since 1978.' "[9] Furthermore, Coleman pointed out that the raw data are in the public domain, as required in the Freedom of Information Act, freely available "to others eager to find mistakes." And he and his colleagues had sought, as scholars always do, "to be painstaking in our analysis and to attempt

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complete accuracy in our reporting"—wholly in terms of self-interest, because it is important that sociologists not be shown wrong by later review of the data.

Others, responding to the study, suggested that it was flawed methodologically in paying too little attention[10] to the importance of the decision and financial commitment by the family in sending a child to private school.[11]

The views of supporters and critics of the report received national attention shortly after its publication at a gathering in Washington, D.C., sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics of the Department of Education. Planned as a small seminar of researchers, the meeting became a general conference in which, according to a headline in *The New York Times*, the "New Coleman Study Is Defended and Criticized by 500 Educators."[12]

Clearly, the report was not being ignored. Other researchers began testing the data and publishing letters and papers. Judging from the intensity of the debate, the report promised to become as controversial as Coleman's 1966 work, *Equality of Educational Opportunity*. "I have the feeling," said Donald Erickson of the University of San Francisco, "that Coleman has done it again. He has catalyzed another area of inquiry."[13]

This new level of attention to private education—discussion of federal plans for tuition tax credits and support by the Reagan Administration, along with the emerging debate on the findings of the Coleman report—served to raise questions about private elementary and secondary education. It is particularly appropriate and timely, therefore, to search in these *Daedalus* volumes for understanding of the special characteristics of private schools that suggest reasons for this burst of national interest.

A limited amount of statistical information about private schools has been included for many years in reports of the Bureau of the Census and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. But it was not until 1976 that a systematic effort was initiated by HEW's National Center for Education Statistics to compile comprehensive information about private schools. The Center's report in 1979, "Selected Public and Private Elementary and Secondary Education Statistics," covering the school years 1976-77, 1977-78, and 1978-79, brought together for the first time information about enrollments, staffing, and finances of private schools, with appropriate comparisons with public schools. Two organizations contributed to this study: the National Catholic Educational Association and the Council for American Private Education, a coalition recently formed to represent fifteen national organizations serving private schools. Information providing statistics about faculties, students, and organizational structure for this large group of private schools has been published since 1969 by the National Catholic Educational Association. The National Association of Independent Schools, which includes many of the country's well-known day and boarding schools, has made statistical annual reports and other studies public for almost twenty years.

In addition to statistical information, books and reports have been published from time to time, such as Otto F. Kraushaar's "American Nonpublic Schools,"[14] interpreting the work and special influence of private schools. Donald A. Erickson, Andrew M. Greeley, and others have reported on various topics in nonpublic education, often as part of Catholic diocesan studies. Under the leadership of Erickson, the University of San Francisco's Center for Research on Private Education has provided information about research and

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writing on private elementary and secondary schools through its newsletter *Private School Monitor*,[15] published since 1977. And the Associates for Research on Private Education has been organized as a special interest section of the American Educational Research Association.

Independent Schools

It may be well at this time to distinguish between the several terms that are used to designate schools that are not public, though there is no universal agreement on the meaning or correct utilization of each. "Nonpublic," probably the broadest in meaning, can be said to refer to schools that are not controlled by public bodies and that receive their financial support from sources other than public funds. "Private" has a similar technical meaning, though its use when applied to education rings of exclusion, for dark and unexplained, probably nondemocratic, perhaps even sinister reasons. Those wishing to emphasize the positive aspects of diversity and competition therefore tend to shun "private," and speak instead of "independent" education. "Independent" in this view stresses the virtues of strength and survivability, choice through option, and the rigors of independent determination such as that which characterized the winning of the American frontier.

The following list from the National Association of Independent Schools, which has 809 members, specifies the criteria for understanding the meaning of "independent" and the association's expectations of schools that wish to join. An independent school must

- be governed by a self-perpetuating board of trustees
- be fiscally independent of an organized religious denomination (Roman Catholic and Anglican-order schools—Jesuit, Benedictine, and others—are considered to be fiscally independent)
- have a stated policy of nondiscrimination in admission and employment
- be recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as organized not for profit
- be approved by a recognized evaluative process (such as is offered by regional accrediting associations)

THE INDEPENDENCE OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

The single most important characteristic of a school that is not under public control is its independence. This provides the freedom for a group of people to found and then carry on a school. Leadership and final authority rest with a governing board of trustees, who choose others to replace themselves after periods of service determined by the individual and the board. The board holds final responsibility for all significant issues affecting the school; it may choose to delegate or share this responsibility in any way it wants. This enormous power is limited by only a few restrictions, legal and informal. Public authority

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exercises few restraints on this freedom. Fire and health officers, local and state, require that code regulations be followed to insure protection for citizens that society has determined to be essential.

Regional associations of schools administer accrediting procedures, developed and controlled jointly by all member institutions, and the influence of the accreditation process provides a general supervision and check on performance. Decisions reached through this procedure lack the force of law or bureaucratic requirement in themselves, but they are ultimately powerful through informal sanction that follows public announcement. In many states and regions informal cooperation between state departments of education and individual schools, or associations of schools, provides opportunities for mutual respect to develop as similar objectives are sought.

That the independent school is independent is therefore its most fundamental and significant characteristic. There is freedom to decide what its objectives are to be and how it wishes to pursue them. The governing board can pick a director or headmaster, granting him or her the power to select teachers and students and to establish the form of academic and noncurricular leadership of the school and the principles to be followed in its operation. The board can participate with the headmaster in reaching these decisions or it can establish general principles of communication and reporting that limit the board's involvement to the determination of general policies and the review of performance.

It is hard to found an independent school. It is hard to develop an independent school so that desired objectives are achieved. It is hard to maintain an independent school, as changing forces in society place new pressures on earlier objectives and decisions. No part of the process is easy. No part is automatic.

Independent schools exist in a constant state of movement. In momentary periods of equilibrium, forces of change—some having developed over many years, others following the fashions, trends, or fads of the day—constantly exercise pressure to review and alter current requirements and procedures. At any given moment the life of an independent school will be a blend of dynamic forces and enduring objectives and traditions, expressed in the activities and hopes of its people.

Are public schools not similar institutions? In some respects, of course they are. Public schools blend the interests and beliefs of many people: students and teachers, administrators and school board members, citizens and taxpayers. But law mandates the existence and continuance of public schools. Independent schools survive and prosper only when the collective will of their constituency supports their activities and achievements.

Some independent schools are nearly as old as America itself, having been founded in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Many were established in the nineteenth century and are only a hundred or so years old. St. Paul's School was established in 1856 and is celebrating its 125th anniversary this year. Some institutions now solidly established were begun in this century.

Independent schools close—and a number have in the past decade—when the purposes for which they were established are no longer served, when student constituencies decline and disappear, when experienced and talented

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faculty depart, when financial support and general interest of alumni and friends weaken and wither. Independent schools are an extra in American society. If one closes, students and faculty move on to another. If there is no independent school in a community, students will attend a public school. There is no preordained reason for the existence of independent schools, nor any force in the country mandating their existence.

Why, then, are independent schools founded? They come into being when an individual, or a small group of individuals, has a motivating vision of an objective to be sought. Financial support of interested people, usually at personal sacrifice, validates the striving. And the school is born.

Many constituencies must be served: students, parents, teachers, friends, grandparents, other relatives, and, occasionally, representatives of other institutions, corporate or foundation, those with no direct interest other than the general purposes of civilized society. A coalition of such groups can be formed, sometimes easily, for the establishment of a school, since entire groups of people of all ages can on occasion be seized with belief in a common purpose. As long as such a purpose remains central in the lives of most of the supporting groups, the school will enjoy backing and popularity. Sooner or later, however, and quite inevitably, interests will diverge when the normal, or usual, primary interests of disparate groups begin to assert themselves. It is then that the differing objectives of the several constituencies begin to pose conflicting possible courses of action.

In the last fifteen years, as shifts and developments in ideas swept through American, and indeed world, society, independent education has been challenged and changed. At the same time, independent education, as one of the forces contributing to the birth and life of these changes, has furthered understanding of them as they were accommodated, in the institution's own way, into the controlling fiber of the school. Parents and grandparents, informed by the actions of teenagers, came quickly to understand the potency of new ideas, while other parental groups were educated more slowly, year by year, as children moved toward and into the teenage years.

Perhaps it is the fragile precariousness of independent schools that ensures their vitality and that is responsible for the survival of so many over long periods of time. All who are associated with a school are aware of the consequences of diminishing support in reduced resources and staff, in activities and facilities. There is no undeviating public will, backed by the power to tax, to rely on in perpetuity, to insist that the school, no matter what, must continue.

Independent schools that survive become strong. The approval of the schools' constituent groups has made survival possible. And financial support has allowed them to prosper. Worthy objectives, effective guiding principles, and strong leadership have been combined in forging a sturdy institution.

Independence, therefore, embraces the possibility of failure as well as the possibility of success. But there is no force to mandate the continued dispirited existence of an independent school as there is for public schools.

Once firmly established, independent schools have almost unlimited possibilities in the development of programs and activities. Teachers with unusual competences can be hired even though they do not have college or professional degrees or bureaucratically recognized preparation. In coming years, as career patterns for both women and men change and evolve, this procedural freedom

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will become increasingly valuable. The compelling need for effective teaching to maintain the support of the school's constituencies ensures that such freedom will be employed only after rigorous consideration. Once satisfactory teaching careers have been established, strong faculty members can be given wide latitude in experimenting with normal curricular materials and in developing promising new areas.

Further, attitudes toward student behavior can be changed, moving from a system of rigid rules and known punishments to one that defines behavior and discipline as educational matters to be decided somewhat in terms of personal development. Wrongs continue to be clearly and forcefully recognized, while community response is not automatic in all respects. A community that is testing its own limits, that is willing to be open to discovery of the power of developing relationships, can set new and broadened definitions of understanding and acceptance of student actions, mindful of the struggle toward maturity that is under way. It does not need to respond narrowly to the actions themselves. A community's response to conduct that is not socially approved can be influenced in some degree by consideration for the circumstances of the behavior as well as the action itself. A learning community can tolerate some discomfort when student behavior strays from expected norms if the tolerance can contribute to student growth and development.

For generations schools have sought to further and support student learning, to improve understanding of the individual and society, and to increase those personal abilities and skills necessary for people to live and work happily and productively in the world. The school curriculum in the nineteenth century emphasized classical languages, mathematics, and issues of ethics and theology. At that time only a small number, perhaps 7 percent, of the possible high-school population was in school. Decade by decade, in the twentieth century, increased numbers of students have attended high school. Today 90 to 95 percent of the possible high-school population is registered for classes. Over the years the curriculum has broadened appreciably, offering an extensive array of courses reflecting the twin facts that scholars have greatly extended knowledge of all subjects and that the interest of people today extends to everything and to everybody in the entire world. In response to this vast increase of possibilities, independent schools are free to experiment with courses and diploma requirements. For example, courses for credit are given at St. Paul's School in ballet and dance, music, drama, and the visual arts. Each student must take at least one full-year course in this area before graduation. Such a requirement must be watched closely to determine that these studies actually contribute to the achievement of the school's general educational goals. Further, explanation of the decision for such a requirement needs to be given to the school's supporters, so they will be able to understand that ancient learnings are being sought through new approaches. Hence it is clear that the freedom the independent schools enjoy for promising experimentation is not unlimited.

Independent schools may perhaps seem from my description to be closed worlds, interested only in the mental and ethical development of the young people in their charge. In actuality, their influence does not stop there. It extends far beyond their 5 million students to the entire educational community of the nation.

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The Advanced Studies Program at St. Paul's School, for example, now in its twenty-fifth year, provides six weeks of intensive summer study of a single subject for public high-school students entering their senior year, who have been chosen for academic ability and strong personal qualities. These students experience a residential educational setting for the first time. More important, much more is expected of them than they are accustomed to—more homework, increased emphasis on original thought, greater reliance on independent work. Students return to their local high schools having had serious academic competition, many for the first time, stimulated by an awareness of the depth and scope of knowledge that carries over into classrooms in their senior year. The program has had a marked influence on the lives of more than four thousand students and, through them, on their schools and communities. An unlimited scholarship budget, supported in part by statewide fund-raising, guaranteed by annual grants from St. Paul's School, provides financial assistance for 70 percent of the students, ensuring that opportunity for attendance will be open to qualified and talented students regardless of their family's ability to pay. Needless to say, the program has operated over the years with the enthusiastic support of the State Department of Education, and of superintendents and principals of public school systems who have cooperated closely with the school faculty and director in the important responsibility of selecting students. Throughout the country other programs, similar in objective although different in detail, provide opportunities for mutually helpful joint activities for independent school and public school faculties.

Private Schools

How many of the nation's pupils attend private schools? How many private schools are there? How many teachers and administrators do these private institutions have? How are they organized, and under what kind of control and leadership do they operate?

A report of the National Center for Education Statistics[16] indicates that in the fall of 1978

- there were 19,668 schools under private control, or 18.4 percent of all schools in the country
- they enrolled 5,078,000 pupils, or 10.7 percent of all elementary and secondary students in the country
- they employed 275,000 teachers, or 11.1 percent of all teachers in elementary and secondary education
- they accounted for 302,000 high-school graduates, or 9.7 percent of the country's total
- they had total expenditures of $4.2 billion, or 5.7 percent of annual school expenditures
- their per pupil expenditure for 1978 was $819, compared to $1,736 in public schools
- their ratio of pupils to teachers was 18.5 to 1, approximately the same as in public schools, 19.4 to 1.

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Eighty-five percent of these 5 million students enrolled in private schools attend church-affiliated schools, of which the largest group, 3.4 million students, or 65 percent, attend schools affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church. Lutheran schools enroll 214,000 students, or 4.1 percent of the total, and smaller groups attend other church-affiliated schools: Baptist, 108,800 students, or 2.1 percent; Episcopal, 88,000, or 1.7 percent; Jewish, 72,500, or 1.4 percent; Seventh Day Adventist, 57,000, or 1.1 percent; Presbyterian, 57,000, or 1.1 percent; other church-related schools,[17] 444,700, or 8.6 percent. Approximately 772,000, or 14.9 percent of the total, attend private schools that are not church-related.

Half of the country's private elementary and secondary schools in 1978 (9,850 of 19,668) were affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church; 7.6 percent, or 1,485, with the Lutheran Church; 22.3 percent, or 4,389 schools, were affiliated with other churches; and 20 percent of the schools (3,944) had no church affiliation.

Of the 48 million young people in the country in 1978-79, five through seventeen years of age, fewer than one percent (378,000) were not attending some school. Of those attending, 42,555,000, or 88.6 percent, were in public schools, while 5,078,000, or 10.7 percent, were attending private schools. There were 2,474,000 teachers in elementary and secondary schools in 1978-79: 2,199,000, or 88.8 percent, were in public schools, and 275,000, or 11.1 percent, were in private schools. The numbers of students per teacher were 19.4 students per teacher in public schools, and 18.5 students for each teacher in private schools.

Altogether, there were 107,033 elementary and secondary schools in operation throughout the country in 1978-79, of which 87,365, or 81.6 percent, were under public control, while 19,668 schools, or 18.4 percent, were under private leadership.

In the spring of 1978, 2,808,000 young people graduated from public high schools, while 302,000 graduated from private schools. Of the 3,110,000 graduates that year, therefore, 90.3 percent came from public and 9.7 percent from private schools.

Expenditures for current operations for the school year 1977-78 for all public and private elementary and secondary schools in the country were $73.8 billion. Public schools account for 94.3 percent, or $69.6 billion, and private schools, for $4.2 billion, or 5.7 percent. Throughout the country, an average $1,736 was spent for each public school student, but only approximately half that amount, $819, was spent per student in the country's private schools.

Changes in enrollment and attendance patterns for public and nonpublic secondary schools are reported in Table 1. In 1889 more than a quarter of the students attending secondary school were in private schools, although only 7 percent of the high-school age population was in school at all. Numbers of students attending high school grew in the first part of the twentieth century, so that at the start of World War II approximately three quarters of the possible school population were in attendance: from 359,949 in 1889 to 7,123,009 in 1939. The war interrupted the development of enrollment patterns in the 1940s. Numbers of potential and actual students grew rapidly in the 1950s and thereafter as the postwar baby boom arrived at high-school age. Total atten-

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Table 1. Enrollment in Grades 9 through 12 in Public and Nonpublic Schools, Compared with Population 14 to 17 Years of Age: United States, 1889-90 to Fall 1977

	Enrollment, Grades 9-12					
	All Schools	Public Schools	Nonpublic Schools	Percent in Nonpublic Schools	Population 14-17 Years of Age	Total Number Enrolled per 100 Persons 14-17 Years of Age
1889-90	359,949	202,963	94,931	26.4	5,354,653	6.7
1899-1900	699,403	519,251	110,797	15.8	6,152,231	11.4
1909-10	1,115,398	915,061	117,400	10.5	7,220,298	15.4
1919-20	2,500,176	2,200,389	213,920	8.6	7,735,841	32.3
1929-30	4,804,255	4,399,422	341,158	7.1	9,341,221	51.4
1939-40	7,123,009	6,635,337	487,672	6.8	9,720,419	73.3
1949-50	6,453,009	5,757,810	695,199	10.8	8,404,768	76.8
1959-60	9,599,810	8,531,454	1,068,356	11.1	11,154,879	86.1
1969-70	14,418,301	13,084,301	1,334,000	9.3	15,550,000	92.7
1977	15,800,000	14,365,000	1,435,000	9.1	16,781,000	94.2

Source: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, National Center for Education Statistics

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dance at all secondary schools went from 6,453,009 in 1949 to 14,418,301 in 1969, and to 15,800,000 in 1977. At the same time, the percentage of the high-school age cohort actually in school increased from 77 percent in 1949 to 93 percent in 1969 and to 94 percent in 1977. Though the numbers of students attending nonpublic secondary schools increased greatly in the twentieth century, from 110,797 in 1899 to 1,435,000 in 1977, the percentage of all high-school students in nonpublic schools declined from 15.8 percent in 1899 to 9.1 percent in 1977.

ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Schools affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church have always accounted for large segments of nonpublic school enrollments.[18] Yet since 1965 there have been declines in both the numbers of students and in the percentages of total nonpublic school populations represented by Catholic schools. In the eleven years from 1965 to 1976, enrollments in private schools decreased by 1.1 million students, or from 6.3 million to 5.2 million, a result of declines in Roman Catholic enrollment of 2.1 million (from 5,481,300 students to 3,365,000), and increases in attendance at other church-related schools of 560,000 and in schools not affiliated with churches of 430,000.[19]

In part, declining enrollments in Catholic schools reflect declining numbers of children of school age, particularly in the elementary years, who account for almost 70 percent of Catholic students. National totals of all elementary students dropped from 36 million in 1967 to 35 million in 1972, to 34 million in 1973, to 33 million in 1976, to 32 million in 1977, to 31 million in 1979, and to 30 million in 1980.[20] In addition, Catholic families moved from central city homes, where Catholic neighborhood schools were close at hand, to suburban areas, where there were fewer Catholic schools and where, in many cases, public schools were considered good. Also, as tuition increased, the cost of attendance at a Catholic school became a serious consideration for many families. And in the sixties and the seventies, as values long held in all quarters of American society were increasingly questioned—lessening interest in Catholic education among many whose loyalty and devotion to the church had not previously been tested—some families turned elsewhere for schools for their children. At the same time, other families, many not Catholic, sought support and shelter in the Catholic schools from the force of those same winds of change.

In the five-year period from 1975 through 1980, Catholic enrollments declined further by 308,500 students, but the annual rate of decline of less than 2 percent paralleled the rate of decreasing numbers of children of school age in the country at large, the result of a birth rate that had been falling since the sixties.[21] In 1980 there were 3.1 million students in the country's Roman Catholic elementary and secondary schools.

Beginning in 1965-66, substantial numbers of Roman Catholic schools closed each year. In 1971-72, 509 Roman Catholic schools closed out of a total of about eleven thousand. In the five years since 1976-77, 434 schools have closed,

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an average of 87 a year, signaling the arrival, or approach, of reasonable stability.

All geographic regions in the country have shared these trends approximately equally. About half of all Roman Catholic schools are located within urban areas (cities of 50,000 or larger), and there is a small shift from rural locations to urban or suburban areas. Ninety percent of the elementary schools are still sponsored by single parishes; 80 percent are small, with 400 students or fewer. Thirty percent of Roman Catholic secondary schools now have diocesan support, a substantial increase over ten years ago, when only 24 percent had such support. About 60 percent of the secondary schools have more than 400 students, while 25 percent have more than 750.

In 1980-81, 91 percent of the students in Roman Catholic schools belonged to the Catholic Church, down only slightly from 95 percent in 1970-71. Many of these additional non-Catholic students were black Americans, whose numbers increased from 209,000 in 1970-71 to 252,000 in 1980-81, and Hispanic Americans, whose numbers increased from 216,000 to 256,000.

Changes in Roman Catholic schools in the sixties and seventies are nowhere more clearly apparent than in the departure of sisters and male religious from the faculties of elementary and secondary schools, and their replacement by lay teachers. In 1980 almost three quarters of all teachers in the Roman Catholic schools were lay people, 23 percent were sisters, and about 4 percent were male religious. These figures are reversed, almost exactly, from the situation in the sixties when approximately three quarters of the teachers were members of religious communities. This sweeping change of course had great influence on school budgets, resulting in requests for increased salaries for the religious teachers who continued, and the greater payment of various fringe expenses such as care for the elderly, increased graduate training, and access to automobiles and other consumer goods.

Expenses in the operation of Roman Catholic elementary and secondary schools had historically been small compared to expenditures for nonprofit schools under other organizational control, and for the public school systems in the various states. The zeal and belief of individuals committed to a life of service to others, accompanied by a simple communal living style that had traditionally placed minimal demands on those they served, had sheltered parents and students in Catholic schools from much of the expense confronting other schools.

Catholic education, therefore, had been notably available to families desiring it for their children, particularly in parish elementary schools. Often school expenses were merged with total expenses in the parish or in the religious community or diocese, so that widespread support of the institution by all members, those with children and those without, made the schools possible. Along with increased parish and institutional expenses for energy, building maintenance, and similar matters, increased expenses for schools in the seventies contributed to a general total financial pressure on operating budgets. Where possible and necessary, tuitions were increased in Catholic schools as part of a larger effort to increase income. In such circumstances, facing budgetary pressures, families juggle commitments and, if possible, utilize reserves temporarily, while governments run with unbalanced budgets, print-

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ing money to meet deficits. In 1981 the final resolution of the impact of high interest rates and inflation on families and governments has not yet taken place. So, also, with many nonprofit institutions, including the education system of the Roman Catholic Church.

Earnest parish and community effort to offer elementary and secondary schooling as before, and to find ways of coping with increased expenses, so that financial matters would not, and could not, limit too greatly the achievement of institutional goals, insured the continuance of the Catholic schools, which, in 1980, were serving 3.1 million students. It is not surprising to find that expenditures per student in the operation of Roman Catholic schools are the lowest for all groups in the country. The most recent national figures are given in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2. Average Current Expenditure per Pupil in Public and Private Schools, 1977-78

Public Schools	$1,736
Private Schools	819
Average of all schools, public and private	1,512

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Education Division, Washington, D.C., October 1979.

Table 3. Average Current Expenditure per Pupil in Private Schools according to Church Affiliation, 1977-78

	Number of Enrolled Students	Percent of Total Private School Enrollment	Per Pupil Expenditure
Catholic	3,336,000	65.5	$ 561
Lutheran	219,000	4.3	651
Other church-affiliated schools	770,000	15.1	981
Schools with no church affiliation	770,000	15.1	1,822
Total: All private schools	5,095,000	100.0	819

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Education Division, Washington, D.C., October 1979.

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

This association includes many widely known schools—boarding and day schools, single sex and coeducational schools—located in all regions of the country. In recent years total student enrollments in member schools have

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increased from 200,000 in 1965 to 221,000 in 1970, to 277,000 in 1975, and to 315,000 in 1980.

In 1980 National Association schools awarded $70 million in financial aid to 46,000 students, a significant portion going to minority students, who comprised about 12 percent of enrollments. Tuition charges, adjusted for inflation, went down during the 1970s, a unique achievement in the national education sector. Median tuition for students attending day schools in 1971 was $1,606; by 1980 it had dropped to $1,553 (in 1971 dollars), a 3 percent decrease. For students attending boarding schools, the median tuition declined from $3,393 in 1971 to $2,950 in 1980 (in 1971 dollars), a drop of almost 12 percent. To keep increases even with or below inflation is an achievement worth noting, but at the same time serious questions arise. Since a major part of an educational budget is earmarked for salaries, it is at least possible that this accomplishment reflects inadequate attention to faculty.

SEGREGATED SOUTHERN SCHOOLS

Pressure to integrate the public school systems of the South beginning in 1964, when only one percent of the black children of the South were in white schools, increased in succeeding years. In 1973 it was estimated that almost half of the South's black children were attending schools that had previously been all-white. A few all-white secular private academies were founded in 1964, followed soon by the establishment of schools by groups calling themselves fundamentalist and Christian. By 1969 it was estimated that 300,000 students were attending private schools that in practice were segregated. Correct figures, or even reasonable estimates, were difficult to arrive at, as these schools resisted the orderly collection of information by the government, since the schools had begun, in part, at least, as a protest against the authority of government and the courts. A careful review in 1975, however, indicated that there were probably 750,000 students attending 3,000, perhaps even 4,000, segregationist academies and schools in the South.[22] In a report last year, based on visits to Christian schools in North Carolina, however, Peter Skerry disputes this interpretation, finding many fundamentalist schools not to be racist. The primary motivation for these schools, he found, is a conservative reaction to perceived declining standards of study and behavior in the public schools, and to changing attitudes in society with regard to authority, sex, drugs, violence, and other aspects of the youth culture that developed out of the 1960s.[23]

Future Actions

Independent education constitutes a substantial activity in American society in 1981. It accounts for the education of more than 5 million students, or 10 percent of all elementary and secondary students in the country, employs 275,000 teachers in almost twenty thousand schools, and has total annual expenditures exceeding $4 billion. Independent education is significant as an integral part of America's schooling for its young people ages five through eighteen. Furthermore, independent education has been notably successful. "Public school is no longer an automatic choice" for families, a conclusion based

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on a careful study in one local area, which may well be representative of much of the country at large.[24]

Notably successful? Coleman's work indicates that a climate for learning prevails in the nonpublic schools studied, and that many of the elements long associated with the ideal operation of America's public schools—the common school for all, of memory and nostalgia—characterize these schools. Homework is required in substantial amount; treatment of student behavior is considered fair, strong, and effective; students appear to have a sense of control of their own destinies; and, in part as a result of these factors, there is satisfactory and improving cognitive achievement.[25] Debate on Coleman's report may persist and become the initiating force for lively and stimulating argument among scholars, but public perception of American schooling appears in 1981 to be in agreement with Coleman's conclusions.[26]

How has all of this come about? How have independent schools managed to sustain consensus for support of nineteen thousand schools when no authority dictates the founding and continuance of these schools? How have communities of interested people accomplished this? What kinds of leadership, management, and control in the administration of independent schools have contributed to this result?

Little is known of independent school administration. Little attention has been paid to the arts and practice of persuasion that independent school leaders have followed in developing and sustaining consensus for support for their objectives. There have been few professional studies. Indeed, independent school administration and leadership have been ignored almost completely by the world of academic educational scholarship.

Ignored, certainly, until conclusions by a well-known sociologist that contradict the prevailing myths concerning nonpublic education arrive on the front pages of newspapers. Ignored also until leadership in Washington directs the nation's attention forcibly to reconsideration of the achievements, values, and objectives of the country's independent schools. Ignored, finally, until increasing parental choice of nonpublic schools comes to be seen as a mortal threat to public education, particularly if federal support extends to tax credits or vouchers.

With the evident success of independent education, and with public education in many areas in disarray, it is time for careful studies to be made to identify factors in the operation of independent schools that may account for their achievements. It is misleading, and an overdrawn description, to say that public schools have all the problems and that independent schools have it "easy." It is simplistic to dismiss independent schools as havens of the rich, as too many have unthinkingly done.

Independent schools need to be recognized for the substantial contributions they are making to the education of the country's young and to the needs of the country. How this is accomplished should be studied, in particular to determine what suggestions and ideas in school administration and leadership merit study by those responsible for public education.

Independent schools, also, need to continue and intensify their search for ways to cross the lines of separation that stand between the public and the independent worlds. In what additional ways can independent schools be

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directly helpful to public education? Can independent schools also learn from the public schools? Are they doing so now?

There is much to be studied by both groups. There is much, also, that the middle, more neutral world of academic scholarship must pay attention to. It is time now for this to take place.

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SARA LAWRENCE LIGHTFOOT

Portraits of Exemplary Secondary Schools: George Washington Carver Comprehensive High School

At the Top

WHEN DR. NORRIS HOGANS, THE PRINCIPAL OF CARVER, speaks of "the Boss," he is referring to Dr. Alonzo Crim, the superintendent of the Atlanta public schools. Hogans speaks of him with great respect and deference. He warns a beleaguered music teacher about a last-minute change of plans in the graduation ceremonies, an early-morning "request" from Crim. "The Boss absolutely wants the band to play at the graduation on Sunday. So you know that means we'll have to change our plans and get instruments down to the Civic Center. . . . This is critical. . . . What can I do to make this happen?" The negotiations with the central office for more buses, extra rehearsals, and program readjustments are made within ten minutes of Crim's call. Hogans is relieved to have quickly extinguished "another brush fire," and the young music teacher goes off looking dazed and overwhelmed. The system's hierarchies are clear, the chain of command vivid. Although not visibly present, Crim is a guiding force at George Washington Carver High School. His vision for the Atlanta public schools is woven into the everyday life of Carver.

Alonzo Crim is a smooth, urbane, articulate man who is proud of the work he is doing in Atlanta. He exudes thoughtfulness, focus, and excitement when he talks about the challenges of urban education. Superintendent at Atlanta for seven years, Crim plans to stay for one more term of four years so that he will be able to see the culmination of many of his efforts. Before coming to Atlanta he was a superintendent in Compton, California, a largely black system of forty-five thousand students. When he enrolled in the Administrative Careers Program at Harvard's School of Education, Crim had not intended to become a superintendent. He had expected to return to being a principal at Wendell Phillips High, a big-city all-black school on the south side of Chicago. But at Harvard, Crim's advisor, Harold Hunt, quickly recognized his student's potential, and gently, but persistently, encouraged him to consider superintending positions. When Crim would return discouraged from job interviews that Hunt had arranged, his mentor would offer generous support and sound advice. With each venture out into the world, Crim became less awkward and more self-assured. His style ten years later is meticulously professional, practiced, and smooth. There are no traces of the early vulnerabilities and uncertainties. He seems to meet the inevitable crises with a clear head and a firm hand.

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But his experiences at Wendell Phillips still serve him well. They help him identify with the teachers and administrators who work on the front line. He fully recognizes the social and economic barriers that schoolpeople face as they try to motivate and teach poor and minority children. He vividly recalls his first year as principal in Chicago when he had to welcome thirty-two hundred students, socialize eighty-five novice teachers, and structure the school day around five lunch periods in a cramped cafeteria. Fights and skirmishes would flare up like brush fires around the school. Crim worked to change the school from a violent atmosphere dominated by adolescents to a livable environment run by adults.

He brings this direct experience to his work as superintendent in Atlanta. When he recounts the challenges ahead, he speaks with passion and precision. He is both optimistic and piercingly realistic. "My intention," says Crim, "is to provide a good education for poor urban blacks, and for that I make no apologies." When Kenneth Clark and other oldtime integrationists say he is misdirected in his efforts, Crim is filled with impatience and frustration. Why spend money and energy on an unrealistic goal? He sees his challenge as difficult but clear: to provide quality education for the city's poor and minority children. Of the seventy-five thousand pupils in Atlanta's public schools, fifty-four thousand are Title I students. Of the 121 schools in the system, only 3 are non-Title I schools. Ninety percent of the Atlanta public schools are black. Crim reels off the statistics with ease.

His guarded optimism in the face of the harsh realities grows out of his childhood experiences. Born and reared on Chicago's West Side, Crim was a lonely survivor. Out of a class of about forty in which he began elementary school, only five finished high school, and Crim alone went on to finish college. He cites the human casualties of his childhood as a way of giving perspective to the present. Today in Atlanta 54 percent of the high-school graduates go on to some form of higher education. Of the remaining 46 percent, 37 percent have secured jobs before they leave high school.

There are other signs of promise and success. In Atlanta, the schools' walls are not covered with graffiti, attendance is high, and there is minimal violence. Says Crim, "I think the lack of violence is related to school size. Violence grows out of urban anonymity." Most of Atlanta's schools are comparatively small, and there are explicit attempts to see faces in the crowd. In these signs of progress Crim sees evidence of health and cause for hope. "We are now in the position to do something great. I get so tired of hearing folks say bad things about urban schools. . . . Next week I'll be asking the School Board for the budget for a full day of kindergarten. I can expand here at a time when other systems are barely staying afloat." His job is part of a long mission, and a very serious one. It is almost as if Crim feels grateful for being "the chosen one," saved from Chicago's West Side. He owes it to himself, his people, and future generations of city children to increase the survival rate, even to help a few thrive.

Three years ago Crim was getting ready to close Carver High School. It was an ugly reminder of the deterioration, chaos, and unrest that plagues many big-city schools. When the community got wind of Crim's intention to close the school, they rose up to defend it. "It's not much, but it's ours!" Hogans, an

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energetic, ambitious young principal of a nearby elementary school, was chosen to save Carver. Crim sensed that Hogans was capable of filling the void and thought he might take Carver on as a personal challenge. "He is a diamond in the rough, a jock who made good. . . . He's a man who learns and grows every day." In just a few years Hogans has transformed Carver. He has used every ounce of his energy and spirit to turn the place around, and Crim is proud of his efforts. "He has gotten the kids to listen. . . . He has disrupted the inertia."

The Other Side of the Tracks

George Washington Carver Comprehensive High School is in the southeastern section of Atlanta, the poorest area of the city. No matter what route you take from downtown Atlanta, you must cross the tracks to get there. On the fifteen-minute journey from downtown, the scenery changes dramatically. Downtown Atlanta, with its bold new high-rises and shiny edifices, symbolizes the hope and transformation of an emerging Southern metropolis. In contrast, southeast Atlanta looks gray and shabby. Fast-food joints, gas stations, small grocery stores, and low-cost housing line the main streets.

Carver High looks like a small college campus. An old Gothic-looking structure bought from Clark College several years ago sits at the top of the hill and serves as the administration building. It is surrounded by several buildings—a modern concrete structure that houses the science and math departments; a building for gym, music, and the ROTC program; a long two-story brick building that houses the vocational education shops; a greenhouse; an auto-mechanics shop; other assorted small structures; and playing fields. In all, the campus has eight buildings on sixty-eight acres. A short distance away you can see the borders of the Carver Homes, the public housing project where most of the Carver students live. (Seventy-five percent of the students at Carver come from the Carver Homes; the remaining 25 percent are transfers from the twenty-two other high schools throughout the city.) Built around World War II, row upon row of these simple brick two-level structures form an enclosed community. The low dwellings do not resemble the high-rise public housing of other major cities, but the sense of hopelessness and the boundaries are just as apparent, and the statistics are hauntingly similar. The median income for families in the Carver Homes is $3,700; 80 percent of the families are headed by single parents, and a higher percentage are on welfare.

The student enrollment at Carver High School has fluctuated, but seems to have stabilized at 890. As with all public high schools in Atlanta, Carver goes from eighth through twelfth grades. The five-year grade span is most vivid and visible with the boys. The young eighth-graders appear vulnerable and childlike in contrast to the tall, bearded senior boys who seem to have suddenly shot into manhood. Except for one white boy who was expelled from several other schools and finally found a comfortable home at Carver, the students are all black. The teaching staff is predominantly black; the handful of white teachers are so thoroughly interspersed into the faculty, that everyone I ask finds it hard to say exactly how many there are. None of the seventy-five teachers on Carver's full-time staff live in the community. They travel several miles each morning from the more affluent middle-class sections of Atlanta and its

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suburbs. One teacher who lives in a subdivision twelve miles away is incredulous when I ask him whether he lives close by. "I can't imagine living close by, . . . leaving the school, driving down the hill, and being home. . . . My head couldn't take it." A little uncertain about how his remarks might be taken, he counters, "But none of the teachers look down on the kids, even though they live in much classier neighborhoods, because the kids are sensitive and they would pick it up." The head guidance counselor of the school feels very connected to the community, even though she, too, lives miles away. "I really take my job as servant to the community very seriously. . . . That phone is one of the best things we have. Not only this one on my desk, but that one at home. I let kids know, because a lot of parents work during the day. A lot of them can't make parent meetings. They can't come up here during the day, so I let them know that my phone at home is open to them at any time, because they hold the key to these kids, and you have to let parents know that, too."

A Diamond in the Rough

Despite the grim statistics and relentless poverty that appear unchanged in the Carver community, the high school has undergone a major transformation in the last four years. Everyone speaks of the time before and after the arrival of Dr. Hogans. Norris Hogans, a dark-skinned black man in his late forties, has been the catalyst of change. A former football player, Hogans is powerful in stature and character. He dominates the school. Hogans is a man of great energy. He moves about the campus in perpetual motion, looking severe and determined, always carrying his walkie-talkie. Hogans does not want to be out of touch with any part of his sphere. Through the walkie-talkie he barks orders and makes inquiries. His requests sound like commands. There is an immediacy about him, an unwillingness to wait or be held back.

Everyone agrees Hogans is powerful. Some view his power as the positive charisma and dynamic force required to turn an institution around and move it in a new direction. These enthusiasts recognize his abrupt, sometimes offensive style, but claim that his determined temperament is necessary to move things forward. They willingly submit to his autocratic decisions because they view his institutional goals as worthy and laudable. His detractors, on the other hand, tend to keep their complaints to themselves, forming a covert gossip ring, and passively resisting his attempts to make changes by preserving their own inertia. Many of these resistant faculty have been at Carver for twenty-five or thirty years and are threatened by the changes that Hogans has forced on them. They were used to an administrative policy that permitted more faculty autonomy. Some claim that these old-guard faculty were used to "sitting on their butts and not doing anything, . . . and Hogans makes them clean up their act." Although there must be a variety of responses to his leadership, Hogans seems to be a person that people feel strongly about one way or the other. He is despised or revered. He is not a neutral figure, but one who demands response and reaction from those around him.

Even those who applaud his great work speak of feeling threatened and submissive in his presence. His decisions are ultimate and nonnegotiable, and his commands are sometimes delivered with a callous disregard for the feelings

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of the person he is talking to. Only a very few people seem to escape these assaults. They compose the "inner circle" that surrounds and supports Hogans, offering guidance and assistance, even private criticism. His closest colleague, friend, and confidant is Mr. James, the tall, slender, and impeccable vice-principal Hogans brought with him to Carver. His visibility is high around campus as he maintains order and discipline, puts out brush fires, and serves as principal when Hogans is not around. He, too, carries a walkie-talkie, and seems to be wired directly to Hogans. They are a pair, read each other's minds, and have a kind of intimacy that reflects a deep trust between them. Hogans is clearly the big boss, but James is his totally committed right-hand man. He takes care of the mundane, everyday, nitty-gritty details that elude Hogans, who is dealing with the larger picture. James's style is very similar to that of his boss. He is disciplined, autocratic, and uncompromising. Both men have an exuberant side and a lively humor that appear privately and during afterschool hours. Their laughter, storytelling, and ribbing behind the scenes seems to fuel them for the toughness that shapes their public image.

Joining in some of the backstage intimacy and fun is Ms. Powell, the registrar, and Mr. Thomas, a department head. Both are deeply committed to, and protective of, Hogans. They work very hard on his behalf, and form a critical support system. Powell and Thomas see his weak and vulnerable side, and are privy to his mistakes and occasional poor judgment. Says Mr. Thomas, "I help 'Doc' out. Many times I've gotten him out of some tough jams." With great femininity and certainty, Ms. Powell provides a kind of disciplined attention to details. She is the recorder at important meetings, drafts letters for Hogans that require a subtle touch, and draws up the schedule of events for each day, all tasks that are not officially a part of her job. She is valued by Hogans for her organizational talents, her hard work, and her candor. She lets him know gently and sweetly when he's off-base, and probably has more power than most realize. Underneath her soft exterior is a strong will, a keen intelligence, and a sturdy spirit.

Hogans's ultimate and uncompromising power is not without focus or reason. Certainly, his temperamental tendencies appear to be authoritarian, and he has a large measure of personal ambition. More important, he believes that he will only be able to realize his goals for Carver if he runs a tight ship. Discipline and authority have become the key to gaining control of the process of change. His commitment is powerful and genuine. He believes that schools are transforming institutions that offer black children the chance to participate meaningfully and productively in society. Schools must provide the discipline, the safety, and the resources that these students are not getting at home. And school must demand something from them. "I think we don't expect enough from our students. We seem to be content if they score two years below grade level." But before they can learn, Hogans believes they must be strictly disciplined and mannerly. A chaotic school setting and a permissive atmosphere can only lead to ruin and failure. So there is a preoccupation with rules and regulations at Carver. Radios and basketballs are confiscated by the vice-principal; boys cannot wear caps or walk around with Afro-combs stuck in the back of their hair; and girls are not allowed to wear rollers in their hair. Visible conformity, obedience, and a dignified presence are critical.

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In fact, the mood on campus is one of order and decorum. The edge of fear, the potential for violence, one often experiences in large urban high schools is absent. Bathrooms are free of graffiti, hallways are swept and kept clean, and students express pride in the restored campus. Students gathered in groups do not appear ominous and threatening but well behaved and friendly. Throughout my visit students were mannerly and receptive. They were curious about my reasons for being there, and when approached, they were eager to tell their stories. The students' controlled demeanor is reinforced by their well-scrubbed appearance and their stylish and colorful dress. The external images seem to convey emerging feelings of self-esteem and hopes for moving up and out of poverty and ghetto life.

The discipline and control of students, however, does not appear to lead to a deeply engrained passivity. In response to questions about their lives at Carver, students are candid and critical. Some are even vociferous. They do not seem to fear the repercussions of being outspoken.

Terrence Tubman, a student leader, described himself as a "fiery person." He is adamant about the overly oppressive rules at Carver that leave little room for exuberance and expression. He complains, for example, about the callous abuse of authority Hogans showed when he abruptly disbanded the popular Friday afternoon student pep rallies:

> "If it's on a Friday, nobody really wants to keep working Friday anyway. So, I couldn't see why we couldn't get a chance to release a little steam. But we had them cut to two, and we just barely got four in during the whole year. I suggested, "Why don't we have one every other week?" "Uh, we'll see." No definite answer. So it was just like at Hogans's whim. That's what it was. Whenever he felt like we should have a pep session, we'd have one. And he didn't see that this meant an awful lot to the students. This is something that they look forward to on Friday, and I can see it, because it's not every day they get a chance to release, you know, get down and holler. Even then we have restrictions on the pep sessions, which I can't understand. When you come to a pep session, you come to act crazy and have a good time. Yet we had to act a certain way at the pep session. I thought that was totally ridiculous, and I've been to some fantastic pep sessions at other schools."

Although Terrence feels that students are disfranchised and powerless, he thinks they are less silenced than teachers. He sees the grim passivity of teachers who are afraid to speak out:

> "Teachers are very uptight. I say this with freeness, because I see the teachers and talk with them. I have been granted the opportunity to really get behind the scenes to see what's going on. They're kind of scared. They see things they don't like, but they are scared to say them because they don't want to get transferred. I feel that maybe you don't want to buck the ways, but if something's not right, you got to speak out about it. That's probably one of the reasons why I'm a thorn, because I don't mind saying this isn't cool and that isn't cool. But the teachers, they get paid, and

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Hogans is the boss, and you can't rock the boat. They're really getting uptight because a lot of them are forced to do an extra amount of work, and they can't really concentrate on the student. This is an uptight situation."

Teacher-student interactions are not marked by such timidity. For the most part, these relationships do not seem to be shaped by threat and fear. Even when I saw teachers becoming frustrated and overwhelmed in class, I never saw them deal abusively with students. Some seemed to have the patience of Job as students made insistent and noisy demands. Some disregarded the turmoil and turned off at points when students were overly aggressive and disruptive. Still others, in the face of impending chaos, became more demanding and insistent upon a good performance and obedience from students. But I saw no evidence of careless punishment or unleashed anger on the part of teachers. Rather, I saw the opposite—a genuine concern for their charges, a dedication to their work, and a commitment to broad institutional ideals.

On a hot, steamy morning, the seniors are rehearsing for the graduation exercises in the school gym. The job of orchestrating this extravaganza belongs to Mr. Thomas, the head of the English Department, who is excited about the theme and format of the occasion. Rather than the traditional graduation speeches, Thomas has designed a complex series of skits that display Carver's commitment to work, careers, and employment. In small groups on the stage students enact scenes from the different vocations they have learned at Carver—dry cleaning, tailoring, nursing, auto mechanics, and horticulture—while student commentators offer the accompanying descriptions. The speakers, who have all memorized their speeches, stand rigidly, voicing their well-practiced and flowery prose. Thomas insists on perfection as he makes the seniors practice their parts over and over again. When the speakers' lines come out dull and overrehearsed, Thomas bursts forth dramatically, admonishing them harshly, "You are not projecting, and I feel no life in it. . . . I feel you are very jittery. . . . I'm totally dissatisfied. . . . When you walked up there, you didn't have enough *class*. You need class!" Thomas's message is uncompromising. He wants and expects an excellent performance. But underneath his rigorous and grueling demands, there is a theme of respect and caring. "If I didn't love you like I do, I wouldn't do this. . . . I wouldn't come down so hard on you. I'm not going to lighten up until you get it right. It must be perfect. I won't stand for less. And I won't stand for any negative attitudes. There is no time for that."

A sense of order and structure and an atmosphere of caring and concern would seem to be prerequisites for a successful and productive education, but not the full and necessary ingredients. These prerequisites do not easily or inevitably lead to academic excellence, or to inspired teaching and learning. In many of the classrooms I visited, very little of substance was happening educationally. Teachers were caught up in procedural directives, and students appeared disinterested, turned off, or mildly disruptive. The institution has

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begun to emerge as stable and secure, but attention to the intellectual development and growth of students will require a different kind of focus, new pedagogical skills, and a profound change in faculty views of student capabilities. This most difficult challenge is connected, I think, to the perceptions the faculty holds of student futures and the place and station that students are expected to take as adults in the world beyond school.

Mr. Parrot, a slow-talking, slight man with a deep Southern accent, teaches a social science course to juniors and seniors. The late-afternoon class is depleted by the absence of the seniors, who have gone off to rehearse for graduation. Five students, who have all straggled in well after the bell, are scattered throughout the large, well-equipped classroom. One has her head on the desk and is nodding off to sleep; another girl is chewing gum vigorously and leafing through a magazine; a third student stares straight ahead with glazed eyes. These three never respond to the teacher's questions and remain glumly silent during the class discussion. Two boys, Lowry and Richard, sit right under the teacher's nose and spend most of the period being noisy and disruptive. Mr. Parrot hopes for other students to arrive, but finally decides to begin the class about twenty minutes after the bell. His opening remarks sound formal. He seems to be addressing his comments to more than the few people present. Standing behind a podium at the front of the room, he says, "Young people, let me have your attention quickly." Lowry and Richard quiet down momentarily, but the others appear to ignore his announcement of the final exam. "The exam is something I give to help you, not hurt you. Say, if Carolyn got a D or an F on the final, I would not hold that against her because she has gotten mostly Bs all year. I tend to go on progression. If you start out bad and finish good, I take that into consideration." Another ten minutes are consumed as the two vociferous boys ask distracting questions about the examination. Now thirty minutes into the period, Mr. Parrot takes his place at the overhead projector and begins the topic for the day: social distance. Out of left field, Lowry asks, "Has anyone ever broken the sound barrier?" The teacher tries to ignore the question and proceed with his explanation of social distance, saying that when people approach each other in Spanish cultures, "two feet is far away. . . . To us, it is close." Richard, intrigued by Parrot's comments, offers his understanding of social distance. "I heard of a guy who killed a guy because he stepped on his feet." The teacher is pleased that someone is with him and rewards Richard's contribution. "Very good. That's what we mean by social distance." The rest of the class consists of disjointed and chaotic exchanges between strong-willed teacher and two relentless students. In the fragmented conversation, sociological terminology is hurled around, and words like "propaganda," "mass communication," and "public opinion" are given dubious definition. When I talk to Mr. Parrot after class, he is undiscouraged. Enthusiastically, he says, "This is the best school I've worked in. . . . The administration is great, the principal and vice-principal are as thick as thieves, and that helps. . . . And I think most people care about the children and work hard."

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Although there are glimmers of more lively and skillful teaching going on at Carver, and evidence of some sophisticated work being done by a few students in biology, the graphic arts, and literature, for example, the academic program seems to lag far behind the vocational training offered in the more than thirty shops at the school. Perhaps one reason the shop training appears to be more successful and well focused is that teachers and students feel minimal ambivalence about what they are doing. Highly skilled technicians are clearly and systematically transmitting their knowledge to the next generation of workers. Mr. Ward, the instructor of the dry-cleaning shop, has been at Carver for over thirty years. He teaches what he knows best to over eighty students majoring in dry cleaning. The appreciative and responsive learners can see the connections between the skills they are learning and jobs in the real world. And Mr. Ward is teaching something he values and feels proud of. His heart soars when students learn to do the job with exactness, punctuality, and thoroughness. These skills, translated to values concerning work and life, fit with Mr. Ward's notion of where his students will find themselves in the future. There is, then, an economy of effort, a promise of some return for one's work, and a lack of ambivalence in the minds of shop teachers.

This clarity of vision and purpose is reinforced by a strong history, for the one thing that seems continuous in this rapidly changing environment is the training for vocations. In times past, perhaps the shops were less well equipped and more run-down, but the educational efforts led toward the same explicit goals—to teach poor, outcast black students to become responsible workers; to move children from lives of poverty and chaos to futures of disciplined, steady hard work. Historically, if these goals were met, teachers felt successful and rewarded.

But Hogans's vision for the school is far more ambitious and much less clearly focused. It is not that he looks down on or devalues technical training, but that he wants a more comprehensive and sophisticated education for Carver students. In fact, he is intolerant of people who emphasize academics to the exclusion of shop training, and feels that realists and pragmatists must recognize the value of technicians. "After all, most plumbers get paid a lot more than teachers," he says. But in redesigning the school's curriculum, Hogans wants to create more options and more choices for expanded futures. He wants to open more doors in business, industry, and academia. His vision of a "comprehensive" high school (which includes the three realms of general, vocational, and academic training) is shaped by his wish to change and broaden the institutional processes and goals. But almost inevitably the broader horizons are not clearly defined; there are dispersion of effort, less clearly focused goals, and ambivalence in the hearts of many. The academic side of life seems undeveloped and embryonic at the same time the vocational training feels rooted in history and clearly drawn.

Shaping a New Image

Part of the struggle for a broader, more lofty definition reflects Carver's attempt to regain status. Its image as the city's dumping ground lingers on and casts a dark shadow on the new and enlightened attempts at change. Sometimes

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one gets the feeling that more efforts are going toward redefining the image than facing the reality. In fact, teachers in the other city high schools still continue to use Carver as a threat: "If you don't act right, we'll send you to Carver." Carver teachers are sometimes asked by their upwardly striving middle-class friends why they have chosen to work with "those dumb kids over there," and other schools continue to dump their "bad kids" onto Carver's rolls. (This year, when it was discovered that many of the students from outside the district had been transferred to Carver because other schools could no longer handle them, Hogans transferred them back out, and the school population dropped from 1,200 to 850.) Carver will no longer willingly accept outcasts from other schools and knows their presence will prolong the negative images.

Despite attempts to shape a new image, Hogans still seems to enjoy Carver's location "on the other side of the tracks." But his own continuous allusions to Carver's low status are heard as humorous self-deprecatory gestures—a way to get the upper hand on visitors who may feel uncomfortable venturing from one side of the tracks to the other, and a way to express his commitment to working in this community. At the same time that he makes reference to Carver's poverty and lowly image, he fights to change it. With all of his energy, he battles to turn the school around. I think he would be extremely satisfied if he managed to do the unthinkable—make the dumping ground into a place of excellence and productivity, a place that could be selective, a place where students clamor to be admitted.

The promotional material on Carver begins to convey the new image. The first thing I am shown when I come to Carver is a slide tape that was originally prepared for a presentation on educational innovation given by Hogans at the National Academy of Science. It is a slick effort at public relations. In the slides Carver looks like a snazzy college campus buzzing with activity, students are pictured as well scrubbed and ambitious, and explicit connections are made between the world of business and profit and the curriculum and culture of the school. The language is flowery, even pretentious. As with most promotional attempts, it expresses the optimistic ideal, not the reality. It conveys a sense that life at Carver is intense and productive, when it sometimes appears unfocused and wasteful. The vision and energy of Hogans shine clearly through this slide tape—his orchestration of the myriad realms that constitute Carver; his imagination and ingenuity in building partnerships between business and education; his ability to convince others of the worth of it all. Hogans is a sophisticated entrepreneur, a packager of ideas, and this slide tape is one of his public expressions of image-making.

There are many who complain that Hogans devotes far too much time to creating images and expanding his empire, and feel that his efforts are mostly designed to gain public attention and applause. In fact, he is already beginning to become something of a national figure, traveling around the country hoping to sell his ideas and spread his "model" of a comprehensive education. He appeared recently with Crim before a congressional subcommittee and told the audience that he "did not come to ask for money but for a commitment to the challenges ahead." And he is planning a trip to Portland, Oregon, then maybe to parts of Texas, to consult with school administrators on their educational plans.

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Hogans clearly enjoys the exposure and the attention. It appeals to the extrovert in him that dominates his character. But he also seems to think of his role at Carver as largely external. He has an ambitious vision, and he expects that the resources for executing his plan will be found in the connections he creates with sources of power and influence far beyond the poor black community. Thus much of his energy and intellect are spent making and sustaining these connections, moving outward and away from Carver.

As they watch Hogans go off to wheel and deal, some Carver people feel neglected, left behind, and deeply envious. Students complain of his invisibility and his seeming disregard for their needs for attention. For weeks they try to see him for an appointment, only to have their meeting canceled for more important priorities. A senior angrily spoke of Hogans's disregard for students:

> "I had to run him down to the office to get him, and even then he's so busy I can barely get a word in edgewise to him, and if it's not that, there's somebody in his office at all times when I can't get in there. And I say, well, let me schedule an appointment so maybe I can come. And every time I come in, he's hopping to Washington or another place. Half the students on this campus can't even relate to him. It's not like he goes in with the students and tries to talk with each one. You get the feeling he's kind of way back, distant. I mean, he's just in the office and that's it. That's the way I feel about the administration. I feel that they have set themselves apart. If a student don't like it, they got to leave."

Occasionally, Hogans is abruptly reminded of his inattention to the internal life of Carver.

> In a faculty meeting of department heads and program administrators, Hogans interrupts the largely bureaucratic proceedings by saying, "I want to share a personal problem with you." His tone immediately becomes softer and his face shows more concern. The day before, Hogans had been visited by Sylvia Brown, a seventeen-year-old student at Carver. Sylvia's mother died several years before. Her eighty-two-year-old father became disgusted with her adolescent ways and threw her out of the house eight months ago. In the meeting, the normally fast-moving Hogans pauses to contemplate Sylvia's story. "Sylvia kind of slipped through our fingers while all of this was going on. . . . Sylvia's a basically good girl. This is not a discipline problem. This is a counseling problem. . . . We spend far too much time on administrative and staff problems and too little on the well-being of individual students." Hogans concludes by expressing his own feelings of guilt. "The worst part about it was she said she had tried to see me for a week. I really caved in when I heard that."

A few faculty express these same feelings of neglect. They regard Hogans's public relations activities as efforts at self-promotion and self-aggrandizement. But most recognize the inevitable trade-offs of having a principal who is willing to track down resources and broaden horizons. They accept his neglect of the everydayness of school in exchange for the benefits of his external operations.

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Without his strong political acumen and his energetic search for finances, they know that Carver would have fewer resources to work with and that school life would be less abundant.

One of the potential casualties of model-building and the packaging of ideas is that more attention is paid to selling than producing. Before the ideas have been adequately formed, tested, and refined, there are attempts to disseminate them abroad. (One of the tensions that must plague Hogans is his realization of the discrepancies between image and reality at Carver, and the unfinished state of his operations there. He is eager, even impatient, to "close the gap" and move toward a smoother stability.) Carver is certainly not alone in its imperfections. Any social institution, particularly if it is growing and evolving, copes with weaknesses and rough edges. But Carver's imperfections are made more visible by contrast with the projected, idealized images being portrayed to the wider public. The school seems to fall short only in relation to the public relations picture, not if one views Carver's tortuous history or the difficult realities that shape its present. In fact, looking back a few years, one is exceedingly impressed with what has been accomplished at Carver.

When Hogans was assigned to Carver and told to report there the next day, he sat up all night and drank a whole case of beer. Hogans had been principal of the elementary school right down the hill from Carver and was well aware of the chaos and deterioration there. And for years he had heard Carver identified as the "dumping ground" of the Atlanta school system. Hogans approached his new assignment with dread and trepidation mixed with a sense of challenge and promise. This seemed a good place to test his imagination, his energy, and his commitment to poor black children. He also knew that if he were successful, he would be recognized as a great educator, as one who had the magic key to the complex problems facing urban education.

On his first day at Carver, Hogans faced a curious and skeptical faculty, but one depleted and discouraged and in need of renewal, energy, and direction from their new leader. For several years they had existed under a laissez-faire, weary administration, a chronically ill principal who had let things deteriorate around him. Teachers were used to a great deal of autonomy; there was little interdependence and almost no sense of cohesion in the staff. Hogans's first response to the aimlessness and laziness that he perceived was "to show them who was in charge." He started the first faculty meeting with fighting words: "You are either part of the team or you are not." Tough standards of behavior and decorum were stressed with his new faculty; rules and regulations were consistently and rigorously enforced. Hogans began with a heavy hand and an autocratic style, an orientation that matched his temperament, but also one that he believed would reestablish order and control in an environment that had lost all sense of direction and stability.

The physical environment matched the deteriorating human spirit. "Roaches were running around like cats. . . . There was dirt and filth everywhere. . . . The band instruments were all broken up. . . . Athletic trophies were falling out of broken glass cabinets!" Hogans says incredulously, "I can't believe no one stood up and screamed about it!" Climbing out of the rubbish took optimism, perseverance, and hard work, all qualities that Hogans seems to possess in good measure. But to get people to conform to the imposed structure, Hogans also

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used limits and threats. No deviations or improvisations were tolerated by the new principal. Some almost suffocated in this claustrophobic atmosphere that allowed little room for self-expression and professional autonomy. Others welcomed the imposed order, the new sense of collectivity, and the "big-daddy" image of a take-charge principal.

Hogans believes that faculty found the transition more difficult than did the students. Four years later some faculty are still "dragging their feet" and resisting his direction. He recognizes that, in general, adults are more set in their ways and less malleable than adolescents, but he uses similar strategies for molding their behavior. Strict obedience and absolute conformity are required of both groups. Privileges and rewards are withheld when teachers or students do not follow orders. A teacher who has not followed the standard procedures for signing off campus is given no chance to defend himself. Hogans responds immediately and angrily. "That person is going to be docked. Hit them in the pocketbook. . . . When teachers are irresponsible, the kids always get the short end of the stick."

Hogans recognizes that a preoccupation with discipline will not shape good teachers or inspire faculty commitment, although he does feel that order is a precondition for educational progress. He knows that teachers need to be energized and shored up. They grow stale after years of teaching and need periodic in-service training that offers new approaches and ideas. Hogans sees a need for this kind of external stimulation of experienced staff as well as the need for some "new blood." He wants to rid the faculty of the lingering lethargy that he perceives as inhibiting student success in school. But behind his call for increased energy and commitment seems to be the budding realization that inspired teaching cannot be enforced, that the creativity and productivity of teachers must be generated from within, and require the complex and subtle mixture of inputs from students and teachers. It is that elusive combination of psychic and intellectual forces that continues to be beyond the reach of Hogans.

He does make meaningful attempts to provide sustenance and nourishment for needy teachers. How can teachers give to students when they themselves feel hungry? Hogans speaks proudly of the daily expression of nourishment. "I feed the faculty a hot breakfast every morning, . . . grits, eggs, bacon, . . . the whole thing." Additionally, the faculty are not required to patrol the halls or stay for afternoon meetings. All faculty meetings take place between 8:00 and 8:30 in the morning, and there is only one full faculty meeting each month. Hogans insists that these meetings be organized and efficient. "We don't have busy-work meetings. We can't waste our time on nothing." Although he recognizes the difficult challenges they face, Hogans sees his faculty as a privileged and respected group that gets its fair share of benefits. He wonders out loud why some continue to be complaining and recalcitrant, and has no sympathy for those who do not make an energetic contribution.

The Spiral, the Hub of All Activity

Hogans's promotional slide tape describes the school as "the spiral, the hub of all activity." The forces at Carver are centrifugal. As Carver spins around in energetic activity, it tends to move away from center. The school's orientation is

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outward and into the wider community. As a matter of fact, a description of the internal organism of Carver would offer a very narrow view of the nature of this complex, far-reaching institution. It is the myriad networks attached to Carver that account for its unique character.

The dominant connection seems to be with the world of work and industry. Many programs establish the alliance between work and schooling, often making them inseparable. The vast majority of students say they have come to Carver to learn marketable skills and gain an entree into the work world. Education is viewed as pragmatic and oriented toward the economic "slots" in industry, business, and the service occupations.

A primary program that establishes the direct connections between work and schooling is the Work-Study Program. Approximately one hundred fifty juniors and seniors are involved in this program that places them in skilled jobs throughout the city of Atlanta. Half of their day is spent at Carver and half in positions at banks, hospitals, offices, service stations, and fast-food establishments. Students are paid from $3.15 to $4.85 an hour and allowed to pocket all the money they make. This is a highly selective program whose status and image have been primarily generated by Ms. Gertrude Taylor, an energetic woman committed to shaping her students into dedicated, disciplined careerists.

Before coming to Carver four years ago, Ms. Taylor had worked as an executive secretary, office manager, accountant, and proposal writer. One afternoon while taking shorthand and typing for Dr. Benjamin Mays, president of the Atlanta Board of Education, he presented her with a challenge that she could not resist. "Would you be interested in training young people for jobs?" Dr. Mays asked in soft, but persuasive, tones. Admiration and respect for Dr. Mays as well as her wish to "make a contribution to the lives of young black students" made her hesitate for only a moment before saying she would do it. Within three days she had a teaching position at Carver.

Her love for her work and her belief in what she does is immediately obvious. She recounts with enthusiasm and pride her many successes with students, her shaping of their skills over several years, and her rigorous selection process. Ms. Taylor's approach to students is respectful and demanding. A student coming in late to school is reprimanded for his laziness, warned that his behavior will never earn him a position in the Work-Study Program, and firmly prodded to shape up. Her manner is strong, imposing, and uncompromising, but the message is one of deep caring and understanding. Part of her caring comes from knowing her students very well. Beginning with their eighth-grade entrance into the school, she watches them carefully and tests their potential as responsible workers. "I try to learn my students . . . the total student—the makeup, the attitudes, the way the student thinks, the ability. But there are other characteristics that I must learn, . . . the habits, the temperament of the student."

Along with observing students herself, Ms. Taylor consults with others who know them well.

> "I work closely with homeroom teachers, classroom teachers, and especially with the registrar and counselors. . . . Along with the information I pick up there, I call the homes and go into the neighborhood. . . .

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> This is my perspective. I'm looking into the future. I tell the parent the advantage of putting the student out in the world of work early. . . . They can use this as a reference. This is experience. It looks good on the resume. It helps when the student goes to college. . . . I keep close contact with the parents."

Once Ms. Taylor has gathered all of the information on "the whole child," she begins the subtle process of matching students with the work settings. She must be concerned with responding to the needs of the employer, the skills and temperament of the student, and establishing a "track record" that will assure the stability of "work slots." For a slot in the Coin and Currency Department at the Federal Reserve Bank, Ms. Taylor searched for a student who was "very pleasant and highly honest." For a job at General Motors that required balancing the skills of accounting, data processing, computer programming, and record keeping, Ms. Taylor found a young woman with a "calm temperament that would not get flustered" by all the demands being made of her. Occasionally, a match between student and job does not work out.

> "Now I have had to take students out of jobs and move them from slot to slot because the student was unhappy. I just did that the other day. A young lady was very unhappy. Mr. Jordan at the Federal Labor Department is a lovely person. But Mr. Jordan has been there twenty-five years, and this young lady is one of those hyperactive types. She's a good worker, but she has some attitudes that just didn't work. And *she* detected that. And she came to me and expressed some sort of dissatisfaction."

Clearly, Ms. Taylor thinks of herself as part entrepreneur ("I sell my program"), part psychologist ("I have to find out what deeply motivates these students"), and part technical trainer ("They must feel confident in these basic office skills before we send them out into the world of work"). She actively seeks to combine the environments of work, school, and family as she guides and shapes students for career positions. In the process of molding students, Ms. Taylor becomes deeply involved with them, is convinced and determined that they can be successful, and links her ambitions for the program with their best efforts.

The Work-Study Program culminates in an extravagant ritualistic event called Free Enterprise Day. Students who have successfully completed the program are acclaimed as they parade on stage and tell the audience about their work accomplishments and future career objectives. It is a carefully staged and dramatic presentation of the value of discipline, perseverance, punctuality, and civility for rising in the world of work. It is a public event that symbolizes Carver's new image. Vocational education no longer has to be linked with tough and menial work for people of low status, but can be seen as training for jobs of choice, skill, and honor. On the cover of the program for Free Enterprise Day there is a workman's hand "laying the foundation to success." The bricks of the pyramid being constructed are labeled "business," "community," and "education," and the major inscription reads, "What a youngster becomes later in life is a direct result of what that youngster is exposed to early in life."

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The architects of the new Carver believe in the principles of democracy, free enterprise, and capitalism. Their images are classically mainstream. They communicate to students their belief in the fairness and rationality of "the system"—a system they believe will respond to the hard work, determination, and calculated risks of individual will. At Carver, however, there is a slight variation in the traditional view of the capitalist enterprise. It is a common minority perspective. There is the realistic perception that blacks, particularly poor blacks, have for generations been disfranchised, powerless, and excluded from society's resources and bounty. The experience of exclusion and oppression has led some to fight for their meager share of the American pie, but has led many more to withdraw from the race, to assume it is rigged and refuse to run. The new ideology at Carver conveys a double message and conflicting imagery. It says that blacks have been treated unfairly, but that the system is basically fair. To overcome the profound injustices, Carver students need to learn how to successfully negotiate the system, must refuse to become discouraged by the barriers they will face, and must become exemplary models of discipline and civility. Carver opens the first window to this wider world of entrepreneurship and profit. It offers a taste of what lies beyond the ghetto walls. Schoolpeople hope that these frequent trips to the other side of the tracks will inspire a belief in the system and a commitment to the fight for inclusion in the mainstream.

These trips across ghetto boundaries are institutionalized as part of the Explorers Program begun by Hogans three years ago. Every tenth-grader at Carver becomes a member of the program, an adaptation of the Explorer Scouts, "designed to provide an initial linkage to the world of work." Each month students are bused downtown amidst the shiny glass high-rises to visit the major businesses and agencies of Atlanta, to explore how they function, and to receive orientations to the careers they offer. The public relations material on the program claims that students gain "an awareness of vocation, accurate images of work life, awareness of the full range of job settings and opportunities available, motivation for learning, increased access to job opportunities, and a broad base for vocational and career decision making." It is unlikely that any single program could accomplish all of these lofty goals, but many point to the Explorers Program as critical to the new purposes and direction of Carver. Tenth-graders all receive clean white Explorer jackets, and it becomes an important collective experience for them. Perhaps immersion into the work world is made less threatening because students "explore" the new environments as a group and do not have to worry about being individually inadequate or awkward. The hope is that this initial exposure to business and industry in the tenth grade will not only lift the sights of Carver students, but also help them make more informed curricular and vocational decisions in the eleventh and twelfth grades. The 1980 graduating class was the first group to experience the Explorers Program at Carver, and Hogans claims that, compared to their predecessors, he sees striking differences in the graduates' understanding of the work world, their career choices, their determination, and their dedication to achieve.

The Explorers Program was Hogans's brainchild. In characteristic fashion, he raised money, made connections, and convinced the Boy Scouts of America that an entire class of students, both boys and girls, could, by virtue of their

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student status, join the program. But Carver Explorers do not leave the city for hikes and camping in the woods. Their explorations carry them to the urban industrial turf of business and banking. They are not learning survival skills for outdoor jungles, but the calculating skills of entry and industry. Yet a central theme prevails that is rooted in the Boy Scout tradition. Scouting is supposed to make strong men out of undisciplined boys. Likewise, the Explorers Program stresses honor, honesty, and rigor, all critical pieces of the new school image.

Most of the doors to the business world could not be opened without David Tanner, the man Superintendent Crim describes as "the second most important person" to Carver's turnaround, and a man Hogans describes as a father figure. A more apt description might be one of a godfather, because the father image implies a kind of judgment and generational competition that is not evident in Tanner's relationship to Hogans. Rather, their relationship is marked by enormous generosity, trust, and intimacy. They are an odd couple. Tanner is the privileged, smooth, cosmopolitan banker with broad connections and a humanitarian spirit. Hogans is the rough-edged, ambitious, resourceful black man with big plans for himself and his people. Tanner admires Hogans's unleashed energy and aggressiveness. Hogans is appreciative of the prosperous, genteel style of Tanner. It is out of their mutual admiration and trust that Carver has been conceived and shaped. They are the architects, the visionaries, the builders playing interdependent roles.

David Tanner is vice-president for community affairs for a major trust company in Atlanta. His office is on the eleventh floor of a tall glass and metal structure rising twenty-five stories into the Atlanta skyline. The floors are plushly carpeted, and the atmosphere is one of efficiency and polish. There is a sprinkling of black faces among the secretarial staff, but the bank seems strikingly white after spending some time at Carver. Tanner's office is comfortable, not opulent.

Contemplative and slow to speak, Tanner talks about his mission in a way that is almost religious. But he speaks with humility, minimizing his part in the building of Carver, and giving Hogans most of the credit. "I am a behind-the-scenes person. . . . I coordinate the relationship with the business community." His commitment to Carver grew out of his long personal attachment to Hogans, but also out of his increasing concern for the deterioration of urban communities. "We seem to have forgotten to tell the young people of today that with opportunity comes responsibility." Tanner fears the lack of commitment and industry in today's youth, and worries that their irresponsibility will lead to societal chaos and violence. The repercussions will fall hardest on poor and minority communities. Tanner assesses the task of restructuring society as an integration of efforts from the political, economic, social, and spiritual realms. But he is clear about the boundaries of his own involvement. Says Tanner,

> "I am fortunate that the bank allows me to do the work I most want to do. . . . I have been in foundation work for over twenty years, and I continue to believe in the philosophy of my mentor, who is now ninety-three years old: search out and identify strong, indigenous people, and support them in their work, . . . and that is what I'm doing with Norris."

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Tanner's philosophy sounds very general and full of platitudes, but his actions are highly specific, focused, and calculated. Behind the generous and smooth veneer of a Southern gentleman, one senses a tough-minded and savvy operator. Most of his backstage activity has been focused on establishing ties between the business community and Carver. The monthly visits for tenth-graders in the Explorers Program are largely arranged by Tanner. For years he has been a prominent member of the Interagency Council, a coalition of public schools, private enterprise, higher education, and social agencies that come together each month for collective learning, problem-solving, and action. And recently he has been involved in beginning the Carver Corporation, a group whose efforts are designed to respond to the economic, social, and health needs of young unwed mothers living in the Carver Homes.

Tanner's most visible moment came recently when he was Master of Ceremonies at this year's Free Enterprise Day. But even on this occasion he was reluctant to take center stage. He feels ineffective working directly with the Carver students, and thinks he must be perceived as distant and irrelevant by them. He points to the persuasive powers of a black woman newscaster who was the keynote speaker on the same program. "She was absolutely magnificent. . . . She told them things they could never hear if they came from me."

Although they move in different spheres, Hogans and Tanner share the same view of the complex interdependence of social institutions in our society. They are constantly seeking connections to new sources of influence, and building networks that will draw in more resources to Carver. Hogans claims that more revenue flows from these independent connections than from the school system's budgetary allocations.

Carver's relationships to business and industry seem most prominent, but connections to other institutions are being slowly shaped and clarified. One such connection is with four prosperous churches that form the Ecumenical Council. The council was Tanner's inspiration. It grew out of his concern for the increasing separation between the sacred and the secular in this society, and his sense that churches were not taking a responsible social role in community life. Tanner worried about the complacency and introversion of the affluent parishes in Atlanta that were content to worship on Sundays but never move beyond Christian rhetoric. A member of an upper-class, predominantly white Presbyterian church, Tanner began conversations with three other prominent parishes in an attempt to combine forces to participate in social action. After much persuasion and groundwork, another Presbyterian church, an Episcopal, and a Lutheran church (all affluent, three white and one black) joined together to create the Ecumenical Council. Guided by Tanner's determination and strategy, they decided to focus their resources on the Carver Homes, and offer support in the form of an active ministry in that community. Collectively, the churches raised money to send black divinity students into the Carver community to live and work. Says Tanner, realistically, "They are not there to save souls, . . . just to help in any way they can."

The divinity students are joined by a "circuit rider," a minister who also works in the Carver Homes and travels among the four churches on Sundays, bringing the messages of urban distress to the congregations. Tanner calls him an "urban translator," and clearly recognizes the mutual ignorance and threat

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that prevail between rich and poor, black and white. The parishioners need to hear the word and be reminded of the separations, just as the Carver folk need their support and resources. As Tanner talks about organizing these churches for action, he speaks with the same calculated purpose that characterizes his business acumen. Clearly, his spiritual life is inseparable from his business interests. Many of the same people who inhabit Atlanta's corporate offices are found in these church pews. With this in mind, Tanner persuaded Hogans to join his all-white Presbyterian parish. He knew that Hogans's presence at church would be a visible reminder of the church's commitment to Carver. More important, perhaps, he wanted to further encourage Hogans's ascent into the circles of influence and power in Atlanta.

The beautiful, gleaming edifices where Tanner and Hogans worship every Sunday are very far away from the modest black churches that surround the Carver Homes. These small buildings are closed all week long; their ministers can only afford to open the churches on Sunday. The other six days of the week they are off making a living in real estate, teaching, dry cleaning—jobs that will subsidize their almost voluntary status as ministers of poor churches. The closed church doors, however, symbolize not only the ministers' other commitments, but also what some identify as the churches' negligent, condescending attitude toward people in the Carver Homes. Over the past couple of decades distance and hostility have grown between the closed churches and the needy community. It is with this legacy of skepticism and distrust that the urban ministers, sponsored by rich white churches, entered the Carver community almost four years ago.

They came to live and work in the poorest community in Atlanta. The Carver Homes crowd fifty-four hundred people into 990 apartments. The two-story brick buildings, lined up along nine streets, were built twenty-five years ago as public housing. They do not appear as ominous and isolating as the high-rise public housing of Chicago or New York. There is something more humane about the scale of these buildings. There are stoops and porches to sit on, and more possibility for neighborly contact. But the people here are just as poor and just as imprisoned by poverty and discrimination. What might have once been planted lawns and greenery has long since turned to gray beaten-down dirt, and there are no sidewalks for people to walk on from house to house. Through the eyes of a Northeasterner, the Carver Homes look semirural even though they are part of a big-city problem.

Velma King, an articulate and forceful young woman, and one of the three original divinity students to come and live in the Carver Homes, told of their long struggles for community acceptance, their battles with bureaucrats, and their ambivalent relationship with the sponsoring churches. King is direct and uncompromising as she tells her story: "Even in attempting to be good, I have to be me." Her certainty, strength, and wisdom make her seem older than her twenty-eight years. When King decided to take on the urban ministry assignment, her father encouraged the new venture. "You send off special rays that will help people, and you need to experience the pain of poverty," he said.

Round, brown-skinned, and simply dressed, there is no visible evidence that King is a minister. She says, "It is so easy to hide behind a clerical uniform. Let what I am come from what you see me doing." Her "community ministry" in

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the Carver Homes has been related to her struggle to become "one of the people," not separate from them or above them in status. She has purposely not become an ordained minister because she is suspicious of organized religion and "very critical of the people who work with social systems." Her inclinations to work outside the system have only been reinforced and strengthened by her increasing identification with community folk.

King arrived at the Carver Homes with two male colleagues, both black. Of West African origin, Cyrus Lungu brought his wife and children with him and maintained close contact with St. Bede's, the prosperous black Episcopal church that joined in sponsoring their ministry. On Sunday mornings people in the Carver Homes could turn on television and see Lungu administering the sacraments to his wealthy parishioners at St. Bede's. This bourgeois connection stirred suspicion in the Carver people, who tested his commitment by slashing his tires and robbing his home. They sensed in him an arrogance derived from his upper-middle-class life in West Africa and the cultural misunderstandings that grew out of their different origins. It was also difficult for Lungu to balance the needs of his family with the heavy demands of his ministry. Leroy Green, a dapper young single man, was tested in another way. Rumors grew up around him as people interpreted his smooth style as the behavior of a police plant. One day he found his apartment broken into, all of his furniture and clothes taken, and his ordination certificate torn up and in a neat pile on the floor. Velma King faced a more subtle kind of community exclusion and skepticism. Most of the dominant forces in the community were women, and they worried that this new woman minister would draw some of the power and influence away from them. King's womanly presence was not muted by ministerial garb or manners. She came on like a person ("I wanted to be recognized as their friend"), and this more modest approach increased their wariness of her.

The first year was a difficult and trying time for all three ministers. During this period of great suspicion they chose to begin their ministry by offering a visible, pragmatic, and much-needed service—emergency medical transportation from the Carver Homes to nearby hospitals during the times of the day when it was virtually impossible to get hospitals to respond to cries for help. It was a year of slowly growing trust as the ministers tried to stay visible and responsive to people's needs, and began to shape a different image of a religious presence. They began to bridge the once severe separations that had existed between church and community.

Even though Tanner and Hogans had been central in developing and sponsoring the urban ministry at Carver, during the first year there was no attempt to build alliances with Carver High School. In fact, the ministers learned to be generally suspect of all the established institutions that served the community. For example, they soon recognized the importance of confidentiality and the dangers of providing any information to the social service agencies that probed for their secrets. "We are successful because we don't have a tattletale system." Their identification with the community and their persistent advocacy stance often put them in positions of conflict with other "care-givers," but they knew that a breach of friendship and trust would destroy years of labor and commitment. Alliances with the community have also been shaped by the

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passage of time. Over the three years of the urban ministry, the management of the Carver Homes has changed at least six times, and the staffs of the other social agencies serving the community are in constant flux. In the midst of this shifting scene, the most stable force has been the community ministry.

In its second year the ministers established a central office in one of the Carver Homes apartments, and each one took responsibility for developing a new program direction. King carved out the services for senior citizens and children, Lungu worked with alcoholics, and Green formed liaisons between the community and the schools. Because of Hogans's membership in one of the sponsoring churches and his genuine support of the urban ministry, the connections to Carver were easily made. The other surrounding schools were not receptive to Green's initiations. Says King, "There seem to be lots of rivalry and territorial jealousies among these schools." Green was given an office at Carver, and he spent much of his time counseling students with problems, working with their families, and providing support to teachers. The crises and problems that he confronted were severe and often unrelated to schoolwork—issues of sexual assault and harassment of teenage girls, child abuse and neglect, murder, homosexual promiscuity. In the third year of the ministry many services have been expanded and strengthened. Green and Lungu have left the Carver Homes to pursue more traditional pastoral roles, and Velma King has been joined by another young black female divinity student. The work within Carver High School is less visible, but the ministry is more embedded in community life, and the urban pastors continue to be a source of solace and support for Carver students and their families.

The school is merely the hub of Carver's fast-spinning wheel. The spokes that whirl around the center are attached to businesses, universities, churches, health facilities, and community agencies. Hogans and Tanner work to coordinate the complex relationships among the myriad supporting enterprises. The impact of the business connections are most clearly visible at Carver. The Work-Study Program, the Explorers Program, and the other student apprenticeships are vital, well established, and meaningful to students' lives at Carver. Less clearly drawn are the connections to academia. For instance, the contributions of university resources are not evident in Carver's academic program, which appears to need revitalization, new ideas, and clearer goals. The urban ministry suffers the same invisibility and disconnection. No one is currently responsible for maintaining close connections and negotiating the realms of families, community, and school. Although the effects of these weaker linkages may be indirect and less visible, it is not clear that they should be imitative of the sturdier networks to business and industry. One of the many challenges facing Carver will be in finding the balance between its centripetal and centrifugal forces.

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PHILIP W. JACKSON

Secondary Schooling for Children of the Poor

NEARLY EVERY MAJOR AMERICAN CITY has somewhere within its boundaries one or more high schools whose curriculum is vocational in orientation and whose student body is predominantly black or Latino. Many, if not most, students in these schools come from homes that have low incomes. These features form a single category: urban vocational high schools serving minority children from poor families—a bit wordy as descriptive labels go, and perhaps somewhat imprecise as far as the racial, ethnic, and income characteristics of the students and their families are concerned. But the category is sufficiently accurate to highlight the distinctive features of a type of school familiar to educators and at least heard of by a large segment of the general public as well.

Beyond realizing that there are such schools, however, most people probably know little more about them, for it is unlikely that the average American has ever even been inside a school of this kind, much less taught in one or attended one as a student. But this lack of knowledge is a deficiency to be overcome by those who care about the state of our society and its people. For what goes on within schools of this type has important consequences not only for the students who attend them, but for our nation as a whole as well.

In these out-of-the-way urban classrooms and shops and assembly halls, a large and important segment of American youth receives its final instruction before its members set out to join (if they are lucky!) the ranks of adult workers. For tens of thousands of our young people, here is where formal education ends. The conditions of its concluding phase for such a sizable number of our citizens cannot fail to concern us all.

The George Washington Carver Comprehensive High School in Atlanta, Georgia, is an institution of the kind described—an urban vocational[1] high school (grades eight through twelve) serving minority children from poor families. Its student body is exclusively black, and comes from homes whose median income is well below that of the average family in Atlanta. Beyond these broad identifying characteristics, however, further similarities between this school and others of its type are questionable, to say the least. They are made so by the insistence of many people close to the school, among them Atlanta's superintendent of schools, Alonzo Crim, and the school's current principal, Norris Hogans, who declare this to be an outstanding institution, a high school worth pointing to with pride. That pridefulness is epitomized in the title of a document Hogans both prepared and delivered before a congressional subcom-

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mittee[2] early this year: "The Carver Model—A Workable Solution to the Problems of Urban Education." The topic of the subcommittee's investigation was "Schools that Work," and Hogans's remarks deftly picked up and played on that general theme.

Whether those remarks fulfilled the title's promise need not concern us; what matters is the expressed conviction, widely shared, that something good, educationally speaking, is going on at this school. Whatever it is, it may work just as well elsewhere. Thus, true or not, that people *are* saying such good things about this school makes us want to learn more about what is happening there and, if possible, to see for ourselves. In April of last year I had the good fortune to spend three days at the school. What follows is a report of my visit.

* * *

Carver High—or just plain Carver, as the locals call it—is located on the south side of Atlanta, about midway between the city's center and its southern edge. The tall buildings of the business district, plainly visible from the school grounds, lie to the north, some ten minutes away by car. Atlanta's International Airport is roughly the same distance away in the opposite direction.

The school's physical appearance resembles a small college campus, which indeed it once was. Its main building, the former home of Clark College (which has since moved to another part of the city), is a three-story red brick Gothic-style structure built near the turn of the century. Flanking the building's main entrance are a pair of towers, octogonal in shape, whose white stone trim, running from top to bottom along each vertical edge, contrasts sharply with the red of the bricks, giving a gingerbread effect to the total structure. Because the building sits on the crest of a slight rise in the land, the pinnacles of these two towers—also of white stone that gleams brightly in the sunlight—rise dramatically above the horizon when viewed from the nearby highway leading to the city.

At first sight the building called to mind a visit I made to Disneyland years ago when my children were young. I remember being struck at the time by the artificiality of the landscape. The facade of the restored country store was too spick-and-span to be real, the sign above it too neatly lettered. The stones of the make-believe castle looked as though they had been scrubbed clean that very morning, and the color of everything, even the sky, was just a shade too bright. Carver's main building looked that way too. It had that same make-believe quality. It was a trifle too photogenic, almost like a movie set. In retrospect, my initial reaction was a harbinger of things to come, and that same feeling of not quite trusting the brightness and the cheerful look of things recurred often enough to be troublesome.

Surrounding the main building, which houses administrative offices, are six smaller, more modern buildings containing additional classrooms, specially equipped spaces for vocational training of several different kinds ("trade areas" as they are called), and other one-of-a-kind facilities: a gymnasium, a band rehearsal hall, a greenhouse, and a day-care center. These facilities, together with a playing field, tennis courts, and a parking area, are connected by paved

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walkways that cross a grassy mall. Huge shade trees tower over many of the buildings. Stands of smaller trees and shrubs scattered about the grounds contribute to the physical charm of the setting and help create an atmosphere that on the whole is much more countrified than urban.

Immediately to the south of Carver's sixty-plus acre property lies the Carver Homes Housing Project, the second largest federally supported housing community in the city. The majority of Carver's students come from these homes. Exactly how many is hard to say, because the size of the student body changes from month to month. In October, for example, the enrollment stood at 1,297; by April it had fallen to 980. (This drop is a topic I shall return to.) A rough estimate by the principal, however, places the number of students from the Carver Homes at between 675 and 700. The remainder come from various parts of the city, with as many as 150 living far enough away to require the use of public transportation between home and school.

Precisely how low are the family incomes of the students attending Carver, whether living in the Carver Homes or elsewhere in the city, is also not entirely clear, but the few available statistics place it near the bottom for the nation as a whole. According to Hogans, all but five of Carver's current students are eligible to receive a free lunch at school, a benefit available only to students whose families earn less than $7,000 a year. The median annual income for 1979 for all families within the Carver Homes Project is an appallingly low $3,742, far under the federally defined poverty line of $5,500. Thus, many of Carver's students, perhaps most of them, live under conditions of severe poverty, and I was prepared to be faced with visual evidence of the hardships and sufferings endured by the young people I would meet.

That expectation was not fulfilled, at least not as I thought it would be. Carver's students had not at all the appearance of living under conditions of poverty. Those I saw—and I must have seen almost every one at least in passing—were nearly all well groomed and neatly dressed. Their clothing was not threadbare, nor did it show signs of excessive repair or the ill-fit of the hand-me-down. In fact, many of these young people were smartly dressed, even fashionably so.

Nor could I discern in the students any other visual evidence of their improverished condition, such as signs of ill health or depressed spirits. Quite the opposite, in fact. The students looked healthy and happy. It would have been difficult for anyone who did not know the family backgrounds of these students to single them out as being victims of poverty.

As I continued to observe, I began to doubt the truth of the statistics depicting the poverty of the community. I reasoned that it is not uncommon for people to report less income than they receive to avoid paying taxes or to qualify for some welfare benefit. Why should those living in the Carver Homes Project be any different?

There *are*, of course, no good reasons to expect the Carver Homes residents to be any different from anyone else when it comes to a truthful reporting of their financial affairs. Consequently, we should treat with some skepticism all statistics based on such reports. In all likelihood they contain a systematic bias in the direction of underestimating the true figures. Applied to the issue at hand, this line of reasoning concludes that the families in the Carver Homes

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Project (and, by inference, the families of the rest of Carver's student body as well) probably are better off than most official reports would have us believe.

A question whose answer I never found was, How *much* better off? A walk through the Carver Homes Project toward the end of the first day of my visit allayed my early suspicions without putting them completely to rest. I returned from the walk convinced that even if the statistics contained a systematic error, they did not miss the mark by much.

Though I did not enter any of the homes, a look inside would probably not have altered my streetside impression. It was apparent that these dwellings were small, and that they were also overcrowded—something easily inferred from the number of people about, people of all ages, sitting on porches, playing in yards, leaning out of windows, sitting in cars, and, like me, just meandering along. Those homes are not only overcrowded but, during warm weather, hot and stuffy as well.

The red brick rowhouses of the Project are only two stories high, with ample space between the units. Each is set back a reasonable distance from streets that curve and wind. There is an openness to the Carver Homes neighborhood, almost a suburban quality, that contrasts sharply with what a northern city-dweller expects to find in a poor community. Most of the customary signs of impoverished living conditions are missing: no dingy tenements, no prisonlike high-rises, no commercial squalor, no din of traffic—none of the familiar and depressing features of the northern urban landscape that characterize Harlem or Chicago's South Side. The absence of all those harsh reminders of what life can be like for the poor gives to the Carver Project an atmosphere that is, by comparison, positively inviting. Moreover, the people seem to work at keeping their property looking as attractive as possible. Trimmed hedges, mowed lawns, and well-tended gardens are not uncommon.

At the same time, even as short and casual a stroll as mine yielded plenty of evidence that this was far from being a middle-class community, regardless of the multiple superficial resemblances. Here and there, along the flower boxes and trimmed hedges and mowed lawns, were the telltale signs of neglect and decay. Sofas, dilapidated and bursting at the seams, crowded several of the tiny front porches. Used tires, scrap metal, tin cans, and other litter lay strewn across several of the yards. These families may not be at the brink of starvation, but neither are they living on easy street. That the students from these homes arrive at school looking as well cared for and attractive as they do may have a significance worth pondering at greater length, but it should not obscure the fact that these youngsters are different after all—worlds apart from their age mates living in more advantaged environments. Just how different these students are, and how those differences relate to the work of the school, became increasingly apparent to me during my visit.

To understand why Carver is so highly thought of, it is necessary to know something about the school's recent past, before the present administration took over. My own knowledge of that history comes exclusively from informants with a vested interest in the school as it is today—the superintendent of schools, the school's principal, and its current staff—and who therefore might perhaps unconsciously paint the present in rosier tones than the past. Even with this

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understandable bias, each informant told me the same story. And that it held together so well, in the sense of being both understandable and familiar to those who know anything about schools of this kind, prompted me to accept it as true in broad outline.

Before the present administration took over, Carver was an institution in decline, a decline so understandable in retrospect, that it is hard to believe it was not predicted at the start. Carver was established in 1948, about the time many such schools were coming into being in our larger cities. The idea behind its founding—behind *all* schools that shared its design—was to create a school specially equipped for students judged to be unsuited for instruction in high schools whose curriculum was more academic than vocational, more cultural than practical. The students who were initially transferred to the school from other high schools, or who were sent there directly upon completion of elementary school, were mainly those with a history of academic difficulties, but there were also included a sizable number whose "troubles" had been more than academic and often multiple in nature. For many of the girls, the "trouble" was pregnancy, a condition not only thought to be painful and embarrassing to its "victims," but one that needed to be concealed as much as possible, lest the morals of the innocent be corrupted. For boys, the "trouble" was some form of delinquent or predelinquent behavior—breaking the law, initiating fights, carrying weapons, trafficking in drugs, and the like. Such young people, so the founding argument asserted, have special educational needs that justify their being sent to Carver.

But another side of this argument, usually unspoken, said that many of the candidates for transfer were as much "troublemakers" as they were "in trouble." Put bluntly, many were thought of as just plain nuisances by the teachers and administrators who had to deal with them. Others, it was feared, were corrupting influences, capable of leading many of their classmates astray. No matter what the announced reason for a move to Carver, it often turned out that a transfer was initiated with more than the welfare of the student in mind. Some went to Carver, it seems, chiefly for the sake of those they left behind.

Thus it is not surprising that almost from the time it opened its doors, Carver was known as a local dumping ground for students few other institutions in the system wanted. It was a school for misfits and rejects almost from the beginning. Indeed, it is easy to imagine how the mere threat of being sent to Carver had the potential to make all but the most unruly student toe the mark.

And what of the students for whom it was no fancied threat, but a reality? What happened when they reached Carver? The school was plagued almost from the start by high rates of absenteeism, tardiness, and dropping out, conditions that went from bad to worse over the years.

As Carver's reputation spread throughout the system, and as its internal problems—attendance and the like—deepened, an even more insidious change seems to have taken place: the gradual deterioration in the quality of the school's professional staff.[3] This undoubtedly exacerbated the problems the school already faced and hastened the process of institutional decline.

The situation at Carver was soon close to crisis. Vandalism had become widespread within the school. The auditorium had been "torn apart" by students; the trophy case in the gym ransacked. Discipline became lax in many

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classrooms. Students acted and dressed as they pleased, and some spent more time outside of class than in. Equipment in several of the shop areas was stolen, and though the culprits were never caught, it is widely believed that both students and staff were involved. Whatever equipment was not taken was often in need of repair, with the result that several curricular offerings were sharply curtailed or abandoned over the years. "Only four shop areas met the state standards when I arrived," Hogans reported. Thus, in addition to everything else that was happening, the curriculum was gradually shrinking.

When the present superintendent of schools took office and discovered how bad things had become at Carver, he thought of closing the school entirely. Instead, perhaps because of a reluctance to give up such an attractive physical plant, and a wish to avoid the stir in the community that such drastic action would create, he decided to see if the institution could be salvaged and its quality restored. To this end, he appointed as the school's new principal Norris Hogans, a man with a background in community work and who was at the time an elementary school principal in the Atlanta system. The most recent phase of Carver's history—its success story, you might say—begins with Hogans's appointment.

One of the questions a visit to Carver seems to answer unequivocally is just how important a principal is to the success of a school. By watching Carver's principal at work, and by talking to the people around him, it became clear that the principal's role is crucial, his importance inestimable. All who have anything to say about the school's recent past echo the same conclusion: before Hogans came—near disaster; since he has arrived—unheralded praise. Almost singlehandedly, and in the brief span of three or four years, he is credited with having "turned things around" in a school that was headed for educational bankruptcy. How did he manage such a feat? What is the secret of his success?

Part of the secret, without doubt, lies in his personality. Hogans is in his early forties, a bearded, barrel-chested, still hard-driving ex-football lineman. His gait, as he moves hurriedly about the school, is athletic and assured; his voice, confident and deep. He commands attention and makes his presence felt by the way he carries himself and by how he relates to people. In a nutshell, he has charisma, and he uses it to good effect.

But not everything about him is unequivocally positive, not even on first impression. Though his self-assurance is such that it must surely infect those he works with, he comes across as being aggressive as well. His frown is as ferocious as his smile is friendly, and as I watched him in action, I thought, "Here is a man who knows how to bark commands and is not above bullying his way to the prize he seeks. He can be tough, and he likes people to know it. He would be an awesome opponent."

Hogans's assured and aggressive nature bespeaks personal ambition, and that, too, was not long in making itself evident. He wants to accomplish much, and for now Carver is his instrument for doing so. This is not to say that he is using the school to fulfill personal ambitions. The relationship between what he wants for himself and what he wants the school to be like is far too complicated to fit such a simple formula. But he doubtless relishes in a personal way the praises heaped on the school since his arrival, as he must bask in the applause

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given him as he travels around the country extolling the virtues of "the Carver Model." Hogans's personal ambitions are essential to an understanding of both the scope and the form of the changes that have taken place at Carver since his arrival. A less ambitious man would have sought less fanfare perhaps, but in all likelihood his accomplishments would not be as great.

Hogans's social background is similar to that of the students at Carver, and this perhaps further explains his effectiveness. His family was large, and during his youth he was poor. He was the first among his many brothers and sisters to attend college. He is thus linked by a bond of common experience to the bulk of his students. He stands before them a living example of what can be accomplished by education and effort. Finally, he feels toward these young people a special kind of commitment and dedication, a sense of mission, that is sustained by memories of his own youth. In a newspaper interview last January Hogans affirmed that commitment in this way: "If I can only leave one legend for my kids, I want them to be able to say that he did what he could to make the quality of life far better for the brothers and sisters 'on the other side of the track.' " Corny? Hackneyed? Perhaps. But on the basis of what I saw at Carver, I am convinced that Hogans means what he says. He *does* care about what happens to Carver's students, and it shows.

This thumbnail sketch cannot, of course, convey the complexity of Hogans's personality or the subtlety of the motives that guide his actions as principal. All I have sought to do here is to render quickly those features of his style that contribute substantially to his administrative accomplishments. His self-assurance, his aggressiveness, his ambitious nature, his "linkage" with Carver's students—all combine in a single adjective: forceful. Without this combination of qualities, it is doubtful that he would have accomplished so much.

But besides personality, even a forceful and hard-driving one, a program or plan, some set of goals to work toward, is needed to turn a school like Carver around. Hogans's plan embraces five major goals, all worked toward simultaneously. Though interrelated and mutually reinforcing, these five foci of activity, or "action fronts"—all apparently of equal importance in Hogans's view—are sufficiently distinct to merit discussing each one separately.

One of Hogans's worries is Carver's reputation as a dumping ground. To combat both the reputation and the reality behind it, he is attacking the problem on two fronts. He has sought to bar those students who are absolutely the worst educational risks: students with "chronic attendance problems," students with "incorrigible" antisocial tendencies, and others. And he has sought to attract better students by active recruitment. His goal is to upgrade the overall quality of Carver's student body in academic, behavioral, and motivational terms, while sending the message out to the educational community in general, and to the schools that send students to Carver in particular, that such a change is underway.

Hogans responded promptly and decisively to another serious problem at Carver, an almost chronic nonenforcement of rules and standards of conduct. He focused on the conduct of students—how to monitor it, how to punish misbehavior, and so forth. But he focused also on the conduct of teachers and counselors—how to ensure enforcement of standards, reporting gross viola-

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tions, and the like. But rather than instituting drastic procedural changes, his aim was for both students and faculty to "shape up," to follow rules and procedures already "on the books." This was accomplished chiefly by better reporting and record-keeping and increased vigilance regarding disciplinary matters in general. Hogans did, however, introduce a few important procedural and substantive changes as to how misconduct was to be defined and handled. Three are especially important in that they express the overall spirit of institutional transformation at Carver: (1) disciplinary action; (2) the involvement of parents in the actions undertaken; and (3) the teacher's role in coping with undesirable behavior in the classroom.

Fast action is one of the basic principles undergirding Carver's "new look" in discipline. This means responding promptly to all serious offenses and, where possible, nipping these in the bud. Hogans and his chief administrative assistants always carry small radio receiver/transmitters as they move about the school grounds. These instruments are used ostensibly for conveying routine messages across the school's huge campus. A second rationale is that the school's administrators are on the move much of the time. But it is clear that the radios serve also to bring an administrator on the run when a disciplinary matter or other emergency requires his presence.

Prompt action carries over to notifying parents and getting them to share in disciplinary actions. A phone call is usually sufficient for minor offenses, but serious or repeated misbehavior calls for parents to come to school for a conference.

Teacher responsibility calls for retaining misbehaving students in their regular classrooms for as long as possible for anything but the most serious offenses. It means also that the school is pledged to do all it can to avoid suspending students from school entirely. Suspension, Hogans says, happened frequently before he arrived: "Twenty percent of the Carver student body was thrust into the streets on a weekly basis because of significant behavioral difficulties at school. [Since then] there have been no suspensions for disciplinary or other reasons."

The restoration and expansion of the curriculum, particularly that portion having to do with vocational training, is the major change brought about under Hogans's leadership. Only four vocational shop areas met minimal state standards when he took over as principal. Now, he reports, "Carver has an excellent vocational program in some twenty trade areas"—a somewhat debatable figure.[4] But the school does certifiably offer fourteen: automobile mechanics, brick-masonry, business education, carpentry, commercial food service, cosmetology, distributive education, drafting, dry cleaning, graphic arts, health occupations, machine shop, power sewing, and tailoring.

In the eighth, ninth, and tenth grades, students receive introductory instruction in a different trade area each quarter—three vocational programs a year, nine in all. At the start of the eleventh grade, students select one program for specialization, and in their two remaining years students receive ten hours of instruction per week in the trade of their choice, close to 800 hours in all.

A fourth innovation is Hogans's efforts to bring as many new resources into the school as possible. These largely entail appeals to outside funding agencies,

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such as the federal government, for the support of new programs, but also involve local agencies, such as church groups, that do not necessarily bring new monies to the school. A Title I program for students with learning difficulties and a special program—nicknamed Propinquity, for students with "problems that might prevent regular school attendance or cause school-leaving or disruptive behavior"—have added substantially to the curriculum.

The initiative Hogans seems to be proudest of is the creation of the Interagency Council, comprised of representatives from various agencies, churches, companies, and volunteer groups, along with some of Atlanta's most influential and productive community leaders. Hogans calls the Council "the hub—the dynamo for the overspiraling succession of programs and activities" designed to promote the following goals, as defined by Hogans:

- Emphasizing the interrelationship and mutual responsibility between and among the school community, businesses, agencies, and civic and social organizations and institutions
- Creating learning experiences that make the skills of communication vital and functional
- Instilling in the students an appreciation for, and pride in, work well done
- Providing field experience for potential occupations and careers, emphasizing the necessity for adequate academic preparation and qualities such as self-discipline, perseverance, and initiative

A statement of purpose that is broad in scope indeed! The Council is Carver's official Booster Club, applauding students and staff for their accomplishments and cheering them on to greater heights, helping the school to procure further resources to carry out its work, and serving as ambassadors of good will, spreading the word of Carver's successes and enlarging its circle of friends and supporters.

How well have all these efforts paid off? What is Carver like today? The following excerpts from Hogans's report to a congressional subcommittee show that the school is on the road to recovery as an institution.

- *Attendance*—Since 1976 we have come from an attendance percentage rate of 70 to a range between 80 and 85.
- *Suspensions*—During the tenure of the present administration there have been no suspensions for disciplinary or other reasons.
- *Enrollment*—Enrollment has increased from approximately 700 students to 1,363 since August, 1976. Average enrollment for an entire year has been 1,200, with the least being 1,000 at any time since August, 1976.
- *Drop-out rate*—The tenth grade year has been identified as the drop-out year. Through programs providing motivation, and stimulating

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interest in school, we have been able to stabilize our sophomore class enrollment each year at around 310, with some 90% of those returning for the . . . junior year.

- *Job placement*—Through the Work Internship Program, Vocational Office Training Program, and the Diversified Cooperative Training Program some 25 [to] 40 students work daily on jobs ranging from skilled labor positions to . . . positions requiring further academic study. . . . Students have been able to by-pass entry-level positions, especially in the blue collar fields, by virtue of the fact that they receive basic skills while in high school.

- *College placement*—From 20 [to] 25% of our graduates go on to institutions of higher learning, i.e., junior colleges and four-year colleges. Some 15% go on for advanced technical training, both at technical schools and through on the job training in apprenticeship positions. Because of our greater emphasis upon academics, in addition to the vocational program, 20% of our students are able to receive better paying and more advanced positions in all phases of working society.

- *Community involvement*—Through the Interagency Council, there are 47 community agencies and organizations involved in giving support to our students and our school.

To these impressive statistics I can add some glowing testimony of my own. My visit convinced me that morale is high at Carver. Each of the fifty or so students I questioned said he or she liked being at Carver, chiefly because of the variety of course offerings. As one student put it, "There's so much to choose from here, you *gotta* find something you like."

Teachers, too, were unequivocal in their support of the school and in their praise of the current administration. Those I spoke with were uniformly enthusiastic about Hogans's leadership and were quick to give him credit for most of the good things being said about the school. One teacher, who had been at the school for several years, insisted that Hogans deserved "80 to 90 percent" of the credit for the improvements. Asked about what would happen should Hogans leave Carver, he said, "I don't even want to think about it."

The judgment seems to be widely shared that Carver is indeed a model school of its type, one that others like it would do well to emulate. Moreover, the Carver Model, as Hogans likes to call it, is a set of strategies—epitomized in maxims such as Involve Parents in the School's Operations, Seek External Funding, Build a Base of Community Support, and so forth—so simple and straightforward that any sensible administrator faced with similar circumstances might have come up with it. Hogans's accomplishments reflect no blinding new insight into the educative process. But the common-sense quality of the notions undergirding his efforts to improve Carver adds to his achievement. For it reminds us that what makes the difference is the ability to make ideas a reality. And it is this quality in Hogans that elicits our admiration and applause. The Carver Model is none other than Hogans himself.

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Want to turn a school like Carver around? All it takes is an administrator with plenty of drive and commitment; the capacity to be warm and friendly, but also the courage to bang a few heads together from time to time and to snarl once in a while to get things done; some good ideas but not necessarily new ones; enough *chutspah* to toot his own horn when given a chance; and, to top it all, a knack for working The System. A pretty tall order indeed, but at least there is nothing godlike about such a person. If there were enough Norris Hoganses to go around, or if we knew how to clone the original, our educational woes would be nearing their end. The ultimate Workable Solution to the Problems of Urban Education is to place one such person in the front office of every vocational high school in the land. On that happy day educators and concerned citizens could finally sit back and relax.

But that is not the whole Carver story, nor do I know for sure what is. But I do know it involves more than the tale of a courageous principal coming to the rescue of a dying school, a tale that ignores the reality of some truly vexing questions. A fuller telling of the tale—an examination of the problems still to be faced at Carver—leaves us in a more sober mood, one that I want now to evoke.

Near the start of this essay I mentioned a funny feeling that came over me during my visit, the feeling that things were just a shade too bright and cheerful to be true—the main building, the look of Carver's students. I experienced, too, other twinges of doubt that were not as immediate and dramatic. Instead they began as a vague sense of something being awry. Gradually, however, the generalized uneasiness took identifiable shape as it focused on three sets of issues: the students' "attachment" to Carver and to school in general; the curriculum of the school as it relates to the institution's overall mission; and the quality of instruction. I left Carver with worries about all three, as sources of problems that remain to be dealt with at Carver and at all schools of the same type as well.

The first of these issues has to do with the actual hold the school qua school has on the students, a condition whose force is reflected indirectly in a variety of statistical indicators, particularly those related to enrollment, dropouts, absenteeism, and tardiness. Each yields a slightly different measure of the school's pulling power.

The picture of that overall condition, as portrayed in Hogans's report to the congressional subcommittee, is a bit fuzzy but basically optimistic: near doubling of enrollment in the past four years; a marked decline of dropouts, particularly at the end of the sophomore year; and an equally noticeable improvement in average daily attendance. He did not mention tardiness as a problem, old or new.

During my visit I came across data that did not so much contradict the numbers (though occasionally they did) as undermine the optimistic spirit those numbers were meant to convey. Consider the drop in enrollment this year. According to the registrar's office, there were 1,297 students enrolled in October, but only 980 in April, a decline of approximately 25 percent of the student body. Such a decline is open to several different interpretations, but none can be that the school's holding power is as strong as epoxy glue.

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The figures on grade-by-grade enrollment over the past two years are equally damaging to the comforting belief that the problem of a high drop-out rate is nearing solution. In both 1979 and 1980 the senior class at Carver was just a little more than half as large as the sophomore class (62% in 1979, 52% in 1980). The ratio of sophomores to seniors may be on the decline as more of the former return for their junior year (as mentioned by Hogans), but from the difference in the combined sizes of the two lower and the two upper classes, a good many entering freshmen still do not make it to graduation.

As for absenteeism and tardiness, Mondays and Fridays commonly have absentee rates as high as 25 percent (and often as high for teachers!). Approximately 40 percent of the students are either tardy to the first class in the morning, which begins at 8:40, or miss that class entirely.

These statistics force the conclusions that the attachment between Carver and a sizable fraction of its student body is so weak that the danger of its dissolution is a constant worry, not only for the school's teachers and administrators, but for many of the students' parents and relatives as well, and quite possibly for the society as a whole.

The threat of large numbers of students not making it to graduation or even to the end of the year (let alone finishing out the week or arriving on time in the morning) gives Carver an unusual atmosphere, one in which the ideas of survival and rescue predominate. What is at risk is not how much these young people will know on graduation day, but their very survival as students. Moreover, the school's mission with respect to these students, its top priority, is, quite simply, to rescue them.

This "rescue mission" psychology is evident at Carver in several ways. One is the sheer abundance and ubiquity of words of encouragement: on bulletin boards and blackboards, in the student newspaper and the senior yearbook, almost everywhere a student might turn he encounters an encouraging word in the form of a slogan or maxim intended in some way to inspire motivation to greater effort. Some of these brief messages have to do with the value of education; others are more general. Many read like excerpts from *The Power of Positive Thinking* or from almost any of today's popular books on psychological self-help.

"Just today I will try to be happy" begins the message on a poster in the hall of the Arts Building, "I will not dwell on thoughts that depress me, I will chase them out of my mind and replace them with happy thoughts." "No Class Boring, No Pride Dull" says the sign on the bulletin board in the band rehearsal room. "Let me give so much time to the improvement of myself that I shall have no time to criticize others" is the prayerlike plea written on the blackboard in the English classroom. "Don't be a fool; stay in school!" advises Snoopy in the school newspaper. "Our motto at Carver is: If the boys and girls at Carver don't make it, neither do we!" declares the principal in a student recruitment blurb. "Nothing great was ever accomplished without ENTHUSIASM" reads the banner headline in the student yearbook. Encouragement pervades the institution.

This attitude is also evident in what Carver's teachers say and do. Cheers and applause seem to come from all quarters and at the slightest provocation.

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Few achievements of any sort go unrecognized, and for the greatest achievement of all, graduation, the reaction is jubilant. But it is joy in a loved one's accomplishment, mixed with relief that he or she has made it after all.

The spirit of encouragement and support at Carver is not unlike that at almost every other school, but here it is intensified by a sense of urgency and relief. It is as if the entire enterprise might come to a halt should there be any letup in the cheering. For a good number of Carver's students, such a fear is probably justified.

The second of these issues has to do with the curriculum as it relates to the school's overall mission. Here, too, the emerging sense of a discrepancy between what the school says it is trying to do for its students and what is actually happening triggered my concern. The publicity material and brochures I had read about Carver, either before reaching the school or shortly after, had created two distinct impressions. The first was that virtually every student at Carver, even those who selected the "academic" and the "general" programs of study, would reach graduation equipped with a set of marketable skills that would give to all but those going on to college a leg up in finding a job as a skilled or semiskilled worker. The second—although never stated explicitly but nonetheless implicit in all that was said about the Interagency Council and the linkage being forged between Carver and the business community—was that large numbers of students would be shuttling back and forth daily between the school and places of employment as part of some work-study arrangement. Neither impression was quite accurate, as I subsequently learned, and in doing so I began to have serious doubts about the wisdom of trying to make them become so.

I did not realize until I got there that a large percentage of Carver's students do not graduate. Since the marketable skills portion of the vocational curriculum does not get underway in earnest until the beginning of the junior year, a sizable number of entering students never complete the training period and thus leave Carver with less than fully marketable skills.

And *were* there marketable skills being taught in some of the programs? Was there for each of them at least enough teachable material to fill up two years of instruction, 800 hours worth? The closer I looked, the more my doubts increased. The program called Distributive Education is designed to prepare students for occupations such as "warehouse workers, receiving clerks and checkers, price markers, cashiers, shipping clerks, and delivery truck drivers." What would students *do* in such a program for 800 hours? Having worked at three of the occupations named, I can assert that a person working as a shipping clerk or a delivery-truck driver does not require ten hours of instruction a week for two years to prepare for these jobs. Such an expenditure of time and energy is of dubious value for both student and school. Other programs such as Diversified Cooperative Training and Health Occupations were no less troublesome.

As for those vocational programs where lengthy training seemed fully justified, programs such as auto mechanics or cosmetology, I discovered that relatively few of these graduates entered the line of work they were trained in. Only one out of every twelve or thirteen boys trained as an auto mechanic will

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work in a garage. A few will make use of what they learn while serving in the military. And only a few girls in the cosmetology program become beauticians, perhaps because the cost of licensure is prohibitive.

There are three ways, of course, in which such statistics might be said to be unimportant, or relatively so: (1) If it were agreed that *all* such students would have fared less well if they had not undertaken the program in question. This would make *any* success rate better than none. (2) If it were to be shown that the payoff of such training comes later in life and is incorrectly judged by what these students do immediately after graduation. (3) If the secondary benefits of *any* kind of vocational training, such as gaining a sense of personal competence or even just learning how to be neat on the job, could be shown to be worth the investment of time, no matter what the eventual specific employment outcome.

Absent such evidence it is hard not to wonder whether the effort is worth the cost. What if all those hundreds of hours learning how to be a clerk or a delivery-truck driver or even an apprentice auto mechanic or a beautician's assistant had been spent struggling with the English language or learning how to think critically or trying to figure out what it means to be a young American these days, black and poor, growing up on the south side of Atlanta? Would such an alternative curriculum yield fewer marketable skills? Would it be less valuable in the long run? I'm not sure.

The academic program at Carver seems not to be doing a very good job either, judging by the number of youngsters moving on to postsecondary education. Hogans reports that 20 to 25 percent of Carver's graduates go on to institutions of higher learning. But in late April I came across a poster with the names of seniors who, as of that date, had been accepted in a college of any kind or in the military service—24 out of a graduating class of 124, and of those listed, 7 were going into the army. Thus only 17 graduates, or about 14 percent, were bound for a college of any sort, most to two-year institutions. Although students not listed will probably enter college at a later date, some whose names do appear will probably fail to show up at the college of their choice in the fall. All the same, neither the principal's figure nor that from the poster comes anywhere near the equivalent statistics from schools whose students are from the middle class. James B. Conant once thought a "comprehensive" school should be a place in which the college-bound youngster is just as much at home, educationally speaking, as his classmate headed straight for the world of work. The truth of the matter is that Carver neither attracts nor produces very many academically oriented students. What to make of that fact is a question to which we shall return near the close of this essay.

My final comments concern the overall quality of instruction at Carver, which I judge to be low.[5] Such a sweeping indictment requires a qualifier posthaste, for without it, some readers might jump to the conclusion that everything I saw at Carver was of poor quality, and that would be a grave mistake, grossly unfair to the teachers in whose classrooms I did see commendable things going on and to those whose classrooms I did not have time to visit. But I remain convinced that much of the teaching at Carver is mediocre, much more than what I had been told in advance about the school's reputation led me to anticipate. In short, I was deeply disappointed by what I saw.

What is mediocre teaching? A "class discussion" where students copy answers from a textbook and then dutifully recite them back to the teacher, who

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is barely listening. A shop area where the students sit idly in groups for almost an entire period before the teacher shows up and excuses them because there is not enough time left to do anything. A classroom in which the teacher obviously has not prepared for the day's assignments, and in the process of trying to cloak that fact, gives the students erroneous information. Classroom after classroom in which the students (those who are doing anything) are laboring over workbooks while their teacher sits at a desk like some benign Buddha, nodding and smiling beatifically, but not otherwise engaged in what is going on. It is teaching asleep at the switch, teaching that plods along like an old drayhorse pulling a heavy load, teaching with blinders on.

Finally, quality in the written word at Carver—materials written by the staff or students or both jointly, from the school newspaper to the mottoes on the walls—is wanting. The ubiquity of glaring mistakes in grammar, spelling, punctuation—the lot—got me thinking about what would happen if instead of spending 800 hours learning some "marketable skill," Carver's students spent half their time polishing their writing and speaking skills. The gains overall, not only in employment prospects, but in the richness of life itself, would far outweigh the losses.

The only task that remains is to comment on my reactions *to* my reactions, in the hope of helping others avoid the errors in my own thinking as I sought to come to grips with what I have reported. If there is any truth to my claims that many of its students are weakly attached to Carver, that the curriculum may not be yielding the dividends promised, and that the overall quality of instruction at Carver is poor, what attitude should we adopt toward such conditions: alarm, resignation, bemusement? The stance chosen in turn determines the way we approach answers to the more detailed questions of whether such criticisms should be made public, whether we should seek to do something about such matters right away, whether anything *can* be done.

To the more general question I have three different answers, two of which satisfy me only momentarily, the third, not particularly satisfying either, but one that seems an advance of a sort over the first two—and perhaps that is the best we can hope for.

The first I call the "let's-be-kind" response. Caught in its spell, I think: Why be so harsh? Consider how far Carver has come in recent years. What can be gained by pointing out its deficiencies? Remember the old saw about the half-empty cup being also half full? Stick with the full half and forget the empty portion. Be charitable. Be kind. Carver *has* come a long way in recent years and it *is* better than most schools of its type.

I am able to break the grip of these thoughts only when I realize that they are patronizing in the extreme and that they rest on the assumption that Carver's remaining problems will yield to the same strategies responsible for the present successes—if only we wait long enough. And my purpose in this essay is not to heap either praise or blame on any one school and its staff, but to illuminate as much as possible the problems faced by all schools of a particular type so that those problems can be faced squarely and dealt with.

The second I call the "let's-be-realistic" approach: Granted that many students at Carver have a weak grip on school and vice versa; that vocational training does not lead to good-paying jobs, nor even to just plain jobs for all

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seekers; that the quality of instruction is far from that in the best schools in the city. But youngsters from poor families and broken homes have always had a weak hold on the lifeline of education, and the goals of vocational education never have been fully realized—because they have never been seriously believed. But at least such study doesn't hurt them, and it keeps them in school. Even the study of Distributive Education is probably a lot better than spending 800 hours on the streets. And schools like Carver have *never* attracted their share of the better teachers.

The fatalism, the cynicism, that underlie this "realistic" view are ultimately repugnant to me. Perhaps these sorry conditions *have* always been with us (only much worse than now) and maybe they *will* never disappear completely. But the realistic view carried to its logical conclusion says that things are not only as they *must* be, but as they *should* be, that they in fact represent some kind of social justice. Given their "place" in society or (less portentously) in the light of what they are going to wind up doing as adults, students like those attending Carver really do not *need* any more or any better schooling than they get. Or such youngsters really cannot *handle* any more or any better educational fare than a school like Carver offers. The quality of their schooling *fits* them as individuals. From here it is only a short step to the argument that students like those at Carver get the kind of education they *deserve*.

Neither of these reactions is without its momentary attractiveness, but they encourage a do-nothing attitude. Both point to a sign that says: Forget it! But I cannot forget what I saw at Carver, nor can I forget the question it raised: whether and in what terms it is defensible to design and operate at public expense special schools for children of the poor. By "special" I simply mean schools that differ in some noticeable way—in curricular content, instructional procedure, organizational structure, or just plain goodness—from those public schools that serve children of the more privileged classes. An old question, I know, but one we must wrestle with anew in every age. As our cultural norms of social justice and fairness undergo change, so too do our notions of what our schools should be like. *Brown* epitomizes that linkage for our time.

Thoughts of such shifts in our collective conscious and their efforts on educational practice call to mind a proposal for the establishment of "working schools" in England, put forward by John Locke toward the end of the seventeenth century, schools exclusively for "the children of labouring people." Such youngsters, Locke declared, "are an ordinary burden to the parish, and are usually maintained in idleness, so that their labour is generally lost to the public till they are twelve or fourteen years old." Such schools, which these children would be made to attend by law between the ages of three and fourteen, were not to be ordinary schools for the teaching of the three Rs. Rather than being places in which students chiefly *worked to learn*, these were to be schools where students chiefly *learned to work*. Locke described in the following way the curricular focus he envisioned for such schools:

> In order therefore to the more effectual carrying on of this work to the advantage of this kingdom, we further humbly propose that these schools be generally for spinning or knitting, or some other part of the woolen manufacture, unless in other countries [that is, districts] where the place shall furnish some other materials fitter for the employment of such poor children; in which places the choice of these

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> materials for their employment may be left to the prudence and direction of the guardians of the poor.[6]

The notion of compelling all of the poor children of a parish, beginning at age three, to attend a school whose principal subject matter was the craft of spinning or knitting evokes disbelief. If Locke's proposal were put forward seriously today, it would arouse a howl of protest, and cause indignant critics to splutter,

> Why the very *idea* is close to criminal. The thought of forcing children of laboring people to attend schools to learn how to diddle with bobbins and keep the floor swept clean, while the children of the well-to-do are taken on nature walks and have music lessons and begin the study of French in the third grade—and such gross inequities supported by tax dollars to boot—why it's downright unjust. It's unfair. It's undemocratic.

If such were the reaction—and I believe it would be—why is there barely a whisper of complaint about the current practice of sending large numbers of teenagers from poor families to schools like Carver, institutions whose rationale goes back, if not directly to Locke, at least to a set of ideas and expectations very similar to those in his proposal?

Is it perhaps a matter of developmental readiness, that it is somehow all right to urge vocational training on children from poor families when they reach thirteen or fourteen years of age but not before then? An argument along those lines would begin with the premise that most such youngsters are bound to leave school at the end of the twelfth grade or before, and that it therefore makes good sense for the school system to prepare such youngsters with real job skills in high school, something it would have been premature to begin earlier.

An attractive argument, no doubt, but one that is flawed, as my visit to Carver revealed. It is based on a premise that all too easily becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. By taking for granted that most students in a vocational school will terminate their schooling at or before the end of the twelfth grade, we then treat them accordingly and, by doing so, effectively assure that our initial prediction was correct. We communicate these expectations to students in dozens of subtle and not-so-subtle ways, thereby encouraging them to think of themselves in like manner, and depriving them of skills and knowledge that would help to make further education a viable option.

Schooling as currently practiced in this country, and possibly throughout the world as well, is a kind of zero-sum game. There are only so many hours in the school day, so many days in the school year, and each of these numbers, over time, has become rigidly fixed and resistant to change. Instruction in a particular subject in a given time slot displaces instruction in something else. Thus any attempt to teach "marketable skills" must squeeze out something else that could be taught in their place. And this something else is a portion of those studies that make up what is commonly thought of as a general education.

A school cannot boast of giving its students both a first-rate general education *and* vocational training of high quality unless that boast is backed up by a longer school day or year. Such constraints could perhaps be overcome

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somewhat by eliminating or reducing all noninstructional time in the school day—"free" periods, study halls, lunch break—but this would not yield enough time to permit the insertion of a complete vocational program into the curriculum without further sacrifice. A school may contend that it gets both jobs done well through superior teaching, by getting the material across to students in a more efficient and timesaving manner. But the example of Carver makes such a contention suspect.

In actual practice, vocational training almost inevitably means inferior general education—inferior, that is, to what it might have been if all the available instructional time had been devoted to its pursuit; inferior as well, by implication, to the general education obtainable in schools or programs that do not try to attain both goals. Graduates of vocational high schools such as Carver not only have little chance of going beyond twelfth grade, but also are deprived of some part of the knowledge and understanding, however broadly defined, that constitute the intellectual makeup of educated men and women.

A counter to this argument is that *without* vocational training in high school, many more students would drop out, thus forgoing whatever contribution attendance in such a school might make to their general education. The argument merits further exploration, although drop-out rates and attendance figures, which are already worse in most such schools than in regular high schools, weaken it somewhat.

Assuming that the sacrifice of some amount of general education for a gain in vocational skills is worth the trade, what skills are to be taught to whom and for how long are still unanswered questions, as is, also, whether in the long run such choices make any difference at all in terms of their value in the world of work.

This essay is *not* an attack on vocational education, although it may sound that way, but an attempt to show that key issues underlying both the theory and practice of this form of education need continued examination. A close look at a school like Carver, even one lasting only three days, helps bring those issues into focus.

References

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[1]That the word "Comprehensive" appears in the School's official name makes the designation "vocational" seem erroneous, which in a literal sense it is. Technically speaking, the school *is* comprehensive, in that its curriculum includes three separate programs of study—academic, general, and vocational. The availability of these curricular options, school officials explain, justifies the school being named as it is. At the same time, all students in attendance, regardless of the program of study they have selected, are required to undertake vocational training of one kind or another to ensure, so they are told, that each ends his or her high-school career equipped with what are called "marketable skills." Moreover, the vast majority of students appear to have selected the vocational route to start with from among the three curricular options available. These features of the school's actual operation provide sufficient grounds for describing the school as vocational rather than comprehensive, even though the latter classification is technically correct and, incidentally, is the way many people connected with the school prefer to have it represented.

[2]Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education of the Committee on Education and Labor, Carl D. Perkins, Chairman.

[3]I have no way of knowing for sure if this is true, and I do not want in any way to offend the many dedicated and talented teachers and administrators who have worked at Carver and those who continue to do so. However, the logic inherent in such a decline has widespread appeal in so many

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sectors of our society these days—matching like with like, in this instance "difficult" teachers and administrators with "difficult" schools—that I am reluctantly willing to believe that at least some of that logic was used in the staffing of Carver over the years.

[4]Exactly how many "some twenty" stands for and what those trade areas are, whatever their number, are questions whose answers are not easy to find. The school's guidance manual, dated 1979, lists fourteen specialities under "Occupational Information and Course Description." A form letter to principals of elementary and middle schools whose students might choose to attend Carver, dated January 11, 1980, lists seventeen "vocational shops." And the 1979 school yearbook contains captioned pictures of students engaged in fourteen separate programs in a section titled "Trade and Industrial Department." Moreover, each of these sources of information lists one or more programs that do not appear in the other two. Each also *fails* to mention one or more programs that appear on one or both of the other two lists.

[5]Such a judgment, difficult to make even under the best of conditions, is made more so by the briefness of my stay at Carver. Yet it was long enough for me to get a look at what was going on inside quite a fair sampling (well over two dozen) of the school's classrooms and shops. Though the basis of my judgment is impressionistic, it is no more so than that on which many forms of evaluation crucial to a school's operation, such as those by accreditation teams, are routinely made.

[6]John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, R. H. Quick (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1892).

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SARA LAWRENCE LIGHTFOOT

Portraits of Exemplary Secondary Schools: Highland Park

Suburban Chic

HIGHLAND PARK IS ONE OF A STRING of affluent suburban communities north of Chicago. A picturesque and immaculate town, it is an affluent version of a Norman Rockwell scene. Lining the main street are pristine dress shops stocked with designer clothes, colorful ice-cream parlors, imposing jewelry stores, their windows agleam with diamonds, and elegant bookstores. In its layout and perfection, it seems almost like a theater set. Few people walk along the main street. The action is at the nearby shopping center that houses Lord & Taylor, Saks Fifth Avenue, and Marshall Fields, as well as some newly sprung-up restaurants, specialty stores, and movie houses. This is where affluent adolescents hang out on Saturdays, spending their parents' money, and where housewives meet for a light lunch of quiche and salad, followed by an afternoon of heavy shopping. This is modern, suburban chic, far from the ugly realities of Chicago, distant from poverty, decadence, and other reminders of lowlife.

The residential streets that wind away from the major arteries in town are quiet and tree-lined. Most houses are large and imposing, with manicured lawns and two-car garages. The houses do not all look alike. Some are traditional ivy-covered brick houses, others are classic colonials, and still others are strikingly modern, with much glass and redwood. Even those that look old seem to be of recent vintage. It is a town of recent design and construction, not one that seems rooted in history. In the early morning male joggers are out, sometimes running in pairs, occasionally with the family dog tagging behind. I suspect that after their morning exercise, they will shower, dress, and drive into the smog-filled city to sedentary jobs in a Chicago high-rise. Other than the morning joggers, there is little movement on the streets. People rarely walk, but move by car from place to place.

In the past few years Highland Park has become known as a "settlers' " community. Houses that sold for $80,000 a decade ago now go for $200,000, and these are ordinary homes, not extravagant structures. But few houses are put on the market these days. "Real estate is sluggish." In the recent past Highland Park was a more transitional community. Young, upwardly mobile professional families would come to town, buy a house, and enroll their children in the good public schools. Once their children went off to college, the parents would leave Highland Park, often returning to the city, to a condominium that required less upkeep, and where there were more options for entertainment and a more adult-centered existence. Today's Highland Park

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families rarely follow this pattern. Parents are far more likely to remain in their large suburban homes after their children are fully grown and out of the house—"two old people rattling around in twelve rooms." They remain partly because of increased fears about city-dwelling and partly because young families cannot afford to buy their $200,000 houses at today's mortgage rates. According to local observers, the stagnant real estate market has made the town noticeably "older" and less vibrant.

The lack of new blood has had an enormous impact on the school population. Along with the declining birth rates of the last two decades, the decreasing proportion of young families in town has led to a significant shift in school population. Long used to the abundance of expansion and the extravagances of growth, schoolpeople have had to learn to accommodate to budgetary constraints, school closings, and a stationary group of teachers. And a town familiar with transitions and mobility, moving trucks and farewells, now must anticipate forming enduring relationships and confront the pressures of continuity and stability.

At the end of town, right off the major thoroughfare and under the railroad viaduct, sits Highland Park High School. The viaduct has recently become famous. A few weeks before my visit, the *Chicago Tribune* ran a series on the rapid rise of teenage suicide on the Northshore, and showed a picture of this viaduct with graffiti that read, "This town is no fun anymore."

The school is a large, sprawling brick structure surrounded by playing fields and by parking lots full of teachers' and students' cars. Like many other suburban high schools, its shape seems undefined and unplanned, the result of additions and expansions as the population grew to twenty-four hundred students. The original Sandwich building was constructed by bricklaying students in the early 1900s. Small and solidly built, it now houses the yearbook and newspaper staffs. To get to this building one must wind down many corridors, past the swimming pools, student theater, ceramics area, graphic design department, and finally up several steps and back into time. It is the only place in town where one feels the weight of tradition, the old bricks laid by laborers' hands. The eastern wing of the high school was built in the early 1920s, and other sections sprung up in the decades that followed. The last addition was completed in 1950, and includes the gym and cafeterias. The main buildings, East, West, and Main, are each three stories tall, joined together in a mazelike structure. Thankfully, hall monitors, usually teachers, are spaced throughout the building to offer directions to the lost and weary traveler.

A Listening Leadership

The administrative activity takes place in the main building on the second floor, where Mr. Benson, the principal, and his support personnel are housed. The offices of his three vice-principals are scattered in other parts of the building, reflecting a decentralized, low-visibility leadership. Benson speaks proudly of the fact that the school runs with "very little administrative overlay."

Inside the central office is a comfortable waiting area of couches and chairs, and a friendly, accommodating receptionist who welcomes visitors. Mr. Benson's secretary, an efficient, warm person, sits behind high decorated

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partitions, close to the door of the principal's inner office. Everyone on the staff is unusually responsive and obliging. Collectively, they present a friendly face to the outside world. There is another door into the central office area used by "insiders" who move in and out comfortably, telling the latest news, passing on messages, and making appointments.

These offices seem to be an extension of Mr. Benson's calmness and affability. He is a tall, slender, mildly handsome man in his mid-fifties, who greets people easily and has a gift for making others feel comfortable. Rather than sit behind his large and imposing desk, he is more likely to join his visitors at the round table in the center of his elegantly appointed office, and offer them a cup of freshly brewed coffee. His style is cool, his manner confident. He says of himself, "I am long on people skills."

Mr. Benson has been in the school system for twenty-five years. He arrived in 1956 after receiving his M.A. in history from the University of Iowa. It was a time of enormous expansion and growth in the "second ring" of suburbs north of Chicago, and Benson saw Highland Park as a town offering opportunity and challenge. He joined the History Department and soon took on the quasi-administrative role of advisor-chairman of the junior class. The principal at that time was a "very paternalistic" man who regarded his faculty as a family. Relationships among teachers were close; there was genuine support and collaboration among colleagues; and the future looked promising. But when a new school was built in nearby Deerfield four years later, Benson could not resist the challenge of becoming the dean, second in command under the principal. Deerfield was a small school of three hundred students, where everyone played multiple roles and there were "no hang-ups with titles." The staff was risk-taking and experimental; decisions were often openly negotiated. In 1963, when the principal of Deerfield left to get his doctorate, Benson became principal. He describes his thirteen years at Deerfield with enthusiasm. The population expanded rapidly, and the community "adopted their growing school," offering support and feelings of pride in its development. During the first ten years of his leadership, Benson recruited between thirty and forty teachers a year.

His work was made easier by the appointment of Mr. Petaccia as his vice-principal in charge of discipline. They have remained loyal and affectionate partners ever since, reflecting different, yet highly compatible, temperaments. Benson is the smooth, urbane leader who establishes school policies, directs curricular decision-making, deals with the superintendent, and makes public statements. His work appears to be so controlled and steady because Petaccia is "working in the trenches," dealing with the underside of school life. Benson readily admits that he could never do his job without Petaccia; that they work like a hand in a glove; that Petaccia rarely receives the glory he deserves; and that the grinding, tough work his closest colleague does is ultimately distasteful to him.

When the superintendent asked Benson four years ago to take over the principalship of Highland Park, he was reluctant to leave the school he had devoted so much energy to. He remembered the staff at Highland Park as more high-powered, tense, and judgmental than his Deerfield colleagues, and would only agree to move to Highland Park if Petaccia were also transferred.

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Together they moved to Highland Park to face a faculty divided by conflict and frightened by declining enrollments and cutbacks in jobs. The first thing Benson did as principal was to visit and talk with every member of the faculty, classified staff, and custodial staff. He asked each person what he or she thought needed changing, and refused to get involved in "old stories" and bitter battles from the past: "I would only consider events in the present." Benson was eager to cast a wide net, to listen to the voices of all the participating community, and sought to be painstakingly fair. His leadership began subtly, listening for direction from the collective body, working behind the scenes to create alliances, and carefully, but willingly, delegating responsibility to others. Four years later his style and approach are similar. As one faculty member said, "He is the best listener. . . . I can just feel his support and confidence. He is always eager to learn."

Benson expects a great deal from his department chairpersons, most of whom he appointed, others he "inherited." He sees them as "the key persons for staff and program development. . . . I depend on them, I put pressure on them." Chairpersons are required to teach three courses each day, compared to the five expected of regular teachers. Their administrative duties include intensive weekly supervision of beginning teachers during their first two years. After teachers become tenured in their third year, chairpersons are required to visit their classes once each quarter, and confer with them about career directions and goals every other year. Benson works with chairpersons, helping them develop more effective supervising skills, and he personally evaluates their work. He complains that one chairperson is "a fine and good person, but does not like to deal with hard decisions," and he hopes that another will soon "develop tougher skin." He sympathizes with another who has not had an opening in his department for several years, and together they work on strategies for rejuvenation and renewal of a stagnant faculty.

Over the years the departments have emerged with distinctive reputations that are hard to undo or change. The reputations lag far behind the reality. For a long time, science, social studies, and fine arts have been perceived as first-rate departments and English as adequate; foreign languages and math have been most criticized. Since the characterizations are no longer wholly accurate, chairpersons of the departments perceived as weaker have difficulties battling negative images. And the lingering positive characterization enjoyed by the allegedly stronger departments sometimes leads to a kind of complacency. Benson seeks to be evenhanded and current in his criticisms and support, searching for the most relevant and precise evidence of success within and across departments.

Teachers enjoy a relatively privileged position at Highland Park High School. Every teacher I spoke with described the autonomy, support, and comfort they feel in the school. One English teacher compared their "freedom" to the constraints and prohibitions placed on teachers in a neighboring district. "The kids here have a lot more freedom, and so do the teachers. . . . In Newtrier they made them remove *The Merchant of Venice* from the library shelves. . . . Here we can teach the most controversial material." When asked how curriculum gets developed in the school, Benson immediately points to the

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initiative and hard work of teachers. "For the most part, they are sophisticated about keeping up with the important trends in their fields. They go to conferences all over the country to collect new ideas and stay current." Teachers claim that much of their hard work is inspired by the demands and expectations of students. A popular language teacher says, "At Highland Park teachers have to earn the respect of kids. You don't automatically get it because you are a teacher, . . . but if you give kids respect, caring, and support, it will all come back to you." Many teachers spoke of their first year of harsh scrutiny by students, their determined attempts to gain acceptance and approval from them, and their coming together finally in mutual admiration.

In seeking to encourage creativity and autonomy among teachers, Benson recognizes the need to allow for diversity and variation among them. He does not strive for uniformity, but encourages idiosyncracies to flourish. The drama teacher, a controversial school legend whose teaching and relationships are "most unorthodox," has a parade of followers who love her to death, and a "line just as long ready to kill her." A young male teacher is adored by students, but his highly emotional, charged, and seductive style causes eyebrows to be raised among some of his colleagues. Benson does not agree with all of this teacher's pedagogical strategies, nor does he admire his immaturity, but he defends his individuality. Benson sees one of his primary roles as "protector" of these nonconformists.

Benson describes the administration's relationship to teachers as "nonadversarial." There are no teachers' unions, and even negotiations around salaries are without conflict. He knows that such mutual accommodation is rare, and considers it a great luxury to have strong support from his teachers. He says, "I take advantage of that. I capitalize on that." Last year, for the first time, the teachers in Newtrier went on strike. Although the dispute was quickly resolved, Benson worries that the "trust factor will never be regained."

Not everyone agrees that the comfortable alliances between administration and faculty are good for the tone and spirit of the school. Dr. Kline, the head of the Counseling Department, observes that it can lead to a kind of dependence and caution among teachers. "The teachers in this school are treated by the administration like the students are treated by teachers. It is a very benign and benevolent relationship. They are taken care of, given high salaries, good benefits, and lots of rewards. . . . Why would they ever leave?" A teacher who has been at the school for over twenty years echoes Kline's sentiments. "We are all comfortable with one another and enjoy being here. But there is no new blood, criticism, or internal challenge."

Teachers and administrators appreciate the support they receive from the great majority of parents in the community. Parents are pleased by the consistent statistics. In 1956, 85 percent of the student body went on to college. Two decades later the figure was stable at 84 percent, with 75 percent completing college and 21 percent of these going on for advanced degrees. The list of colleges attended by last year's graduating class is full of prestigious schools, and the community is proud that its public high school can compete effectively with the elite private academies for the choice colleges. Parents thank the faculty for their fine work by generously supporting the school. Last year

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the Parent-Teacher Organization raised $30,000 to support an extravagant arts festival at the school. "They raised $14,000 from a single mailing!" Benson exclaims incredulously.

The general feeling of good will between families and schools abruptly breaks down when an individual parent becomes frustrated because his child is not achieving in school. These parents become "caustic, critical, and demanding." They come to the school with a patronizing manner and demand an "immediate response" from Benson. But he always responds to them firmly. "I tell them I have more respect for their kids than to offer an instant response. They must wait for a considered response, . . . and I will not deal with parents until they have the courtesy to deal with teachers first." In the end, Benson does "a lot of listening and diffusing the anger" of parents. He sits on the precarious boundary between school and community, and recognizes the need to negotiate with parents; but he also works to protect students from their overly ambitious and competitive families, and guards teachers from their harsh assaults. The demands of diplomacy take their toll. He plans to retire in the next three years—"There is no disillusionment, only the recognition that it has been long enough."

Under Pressure

Parents in Highland Park express an early concern for educational excellence. They are anxious that their children get an accelerated head start in learning and that they never lose ground. Young mothers read baby and child-care manuals on strategies for the intellectual stimulation of young children, and struggle to get their youngsters into the best preschools. Most parents expect that their children will read before formal schooling begins, and are critical of kindergarten teachers who stress the social-psychological development of children.

Dr. Notman, a developmental psychologist who works for the school district, meets with the parents of prospective kindergartners before the opening of school in early September. Each year she gives the same message, and it is rarely heard by the anxious parents. She asks them to "lay off and don't push your kids. . . . The purpose of kindergarten is social learning. We want to help your children feel comfortable among peers and urge them to move beyond their egocentrism toward cooperative behavior." As Dr. Notman looks out at the tight, resistant faces of the young parents, she makes one final plea: "Your children now belong partly to us, so let us do our job." Even as she speaks these words, the experienced psychologist knows they will not be heard or heeded. The parents are horrified by a culminating statement she makes purposely to jolt them into responding: "I wish schools would wait until boys are in the second grade before they try to teach them to read. Most boys are not developmentally ready to attend to reading until they are seven or eight." The meeting usually ends without much discussion or public reaction from the parents. It feels like an empty ritual to Dr. Notman. Each year she hammers away at the same message, encouraging parental nonaggression and begging that they give their children space for autonomy and self-expression. Each year the parents attend the meeting in full force and sit dutifully through her presentation. After the formal gathering, the veils drop from the parents' faces.

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Individually, and with purpose, they approach Dr. Notman and ask the burning questions on their minds: "What books should I buy to get my Johnny reading early?" "Are there any extracurricular activities that will enhance Susie's academic work?"

Local observers characterize the singlemindedness of parents in various ways. There are a few who feel unambivalent about the origins of parental stress. Parents do it out of love and caring, they claim. Parents know what it takes to be a success in this world, and they want to ensure their child's place on the high rungs of the hierarchical ladder. This is America, the land of opportunity, and these parents are quintessentially, enthusiastically American.

But most observers express some ambivalence about the high-pressure world in which Highland Park children grow up. Mr. Cramer, a sensitive and expressive "young" middle-aged teacher, is outspoken on the subject. He has lived in Highland Park for seventeen years, and his two preadolescent children attend school there. They "love the community, enjoy being known by neighbors, and intend to live in Highland Park forever." But at home he and his wife consciously work against school and community pressures on their children. They downplay grades and encourage their children to think more broadly about social responsibility and personal happiness. Most important, they try to model these contrary values in their own behavior by avoiding flagrant materialism, volunteering for civic functions, and refusing to compete with neighbors and friends.

Mr. Cramer does not believe that the motives of most Highland Park parents are malevolent, but neither are they pure. He believes that parents "live vicariously through their children," experiencing secondhand all of the successes and benefits of their achievements and status. When Mr. Cramer sees parents at community meetings and asks, "How are you?" they inevitably tell him about how their children are doing, "even if I don't even know their kids." And parents only tend to tell the good news, the success stories. If Jason is at Harvard, Yale, or Princeton, he is heard about immediately. But rarely do parents speak about Jennifer, who is studying drama at the University of Iowa, even though "she is a marvelous girl and Iowa is a great school." Cramer does not fault the parents for their pride in Jason, but he is suspicious of the disappearance of Jennifer from everyday conversation. "It is as if she were dead," he says with sadness and disbelief.

Cramer thinks this dramatic separation of parents from their less successful children begins early in many of the town's families. He believes these children never really feel unconditionally loved and supported and that they therefore seek approval through external means, and further, that they rarely learn how to create enduring relationships in their own lives. Cramer traces "the problem" back to incomplete bonding between mother and child in the "the first eighteen months" of life, the result of a mother too self-preoccupied to care fully for her child. He does not mention the father's place in child-rearing, nor does he look at the mother's own needs. Indeed, Cramer's analysis seems partial and incomplete. But it is a story largely untold in this town, intriguing in its search for disturbances below the surface.

The competition among children begins early with the full support and encouragement of parents. By the time adolescents reach high school, the parental anxieties are fully internalized and further exaggerated by a healthy

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dose of peer pressure. Every teacher I spoke with at Highland Park complained of the intense competition among students and the extreme pressure from parents to achieve in school. Some teachers see a "flip side to this coin" that makes the school a "fantastic place to teach." The competition is negative fallout from a positive interest in academic achievement and the desire to be successful.

But students rarely reveal a burning intellectual curiosity that inspires their interest and commitment. More often, their intensity is linked to winning the academic race, scoring points against competitors, and gaining a place on top of the pile. When teachers mention quiz questions or talk about a future test, a normally noisy classroom becomes immediately silent. The students' attention is riveted as they listen for any inadvertent clues or helpful hints. And when graded papers are returned, the teacher may warn, "These papers are private matters for you and your parents to see." But almost immediately students begin anxiously to compare their grades, some suddenly low and discouraged, others exuberant with the good news of a high grade.

With such a premium put on academic success, many students experience failure and deep feelings of inadequacy. The head of special education says, "Even an average kid is seen as slow in this school. . . . The overriding concern is academics, and if you don't fit in there, if you are not super bright . . . you are lost." In a conversation with two bright and talkative senior girls, their remarks centered on the "pressure cooker" they live in. Brenda, a bouncy and energetic member of the prestigious swim team, described the "cutthroat competition" among her peers, "It is a very competitive environment, . . . but that is not always negative. . . . it makes you work." With only slight embarrassment, she continued, "Inside you are always hoping someone else gets a worse grade." Mara, a quieter, more serious girl, and a high achiever in all of the advance placement classes, echoed her friend, and added that even success does not bring relief—a kind of persistent and knowing insecurity lingers on, a fear of losing one's precarious place.

It took Mara more than two years to feel comfortable at Highland Park, even though her family has lived in town for twenty years and her older sisters preceded her through school. During her freshman year the large size of the school felt "confusing and overwhelming" after the more intimate environments of elementary school and junior high. She resisted trying out for school clubs and activities because the competition was so stiff and because she feared defeat. Afraid to move out toward people and initiate relationships, she "retreated into her studies," a safe place that brought rewards. By her sophomore year the school did not appear so crowded and unfriendly. One day Mara dared to visit the offices of the school newspaper, a bustling and lively place where they were always looking for an extra pair of hands. She was soon drawn into the fray. Her work on the newspaper forced her to be aggressive, to push through crowds and get the latest scoop. By her senior year Mara had been voted a member of the student senate and was a major force on both the newspaper and the year book. "Now I am not so afraid of criticism," she says. But the struggles for inclusion were hard fought, and hers is one of the great success stories in this school. How much of Brenda's and Mara's experiences are part of the tumultuous journey of adolescence is hard to say. As I spoke with them, however, it did seem to me that these girls were, each in a different way,

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unusually resourceful, persistent, and energetic. I wondered about those students who do not have these qualities, who never find the door of entry, and who continue to withdraw from the tough race.

School clubs seem to provide some escape from the brutal academic competition, although students are still required to compete for the few choice places. Three hundred girls tried out for fifty-four places on the prestigious dance club; and 130 students tried out for twenty-nine parts in the recent production of *Godspell*. To those on the outside, the clubs are seen as exclusionary. Said one frustrated girl who has been denied entry to the dance club for two years, "Clubs shouldn't exclude kids who don't have special training. They should be more open. I know it's hard to let everyone in, but clubs should be places for people to explore and take risks, . . . even if you are a klutz." Others complain that club members are not always chosen for their talent or training, but because they have friends in the clubs who "play favorites."

For those on the inside, however, membership and participation provide challenge, pleasure, camaraderie, and release from the daily grind of school. At the close of school at 3:00 P.M., another life emerges, and there is bustling activity throughout the building—swim club, cheerleading, ski club, student senate. Faculty advisors are assigned to each of these clubs, but students take the initiative in planning, organization, and leadership. It is here that many students suddenly come alive, grow in stature, and reveal their competence.

Three afternoons a week the dance club practices in one of the large student cafeterias. Girls, dressed in practice outfits ranging from sweat pants and T-shirts to elegant, professional dance gear, are divided into three groups, each working on a different routine. A few are well-trained dancers, with lithe bodies and graceful movements. Others seem uninspired and move mechanically. Still others seem to be nondancers, lost and clumsy. But no one appears to be embarrassed or left out. The president of the club, a vivacious senior girl and a skilled dancer, explains, "We think of this as a *club*, a place to teach and learn, . . . not a performance group." And the faculty advisor, who plays an appreciative, but peripheral, role, also speaks of the club as "a learning environment." Some of the ugly ducklings grow into beautiful swans. Each year she watches awkward freshmen practice diligently, under the tutelage of upperclass peers, and sees amazing transformations in confidence and skill.

One plump, graceful senior exudes style and confidence as she teaches fifteen girls the steps she has choreographed to George Benson's "*On Broadway*." The music is rhythmic and pulsating; images of the city lights, neon signs, and fast living of New York's Broadway seem far from Highland Park. Some of the girls are hopelessly stiff and confused by the steps, but others are filled with the spirit and rhythm of the music, and for fleeting moments seem transformed into Broadway dancers. The student leader's manner is patient and firm. When girls lose their confidence, she inspires and supports them. When they become disruptive, she first cajoles, then mildly scolds them back into line. There is a wonderful spirit of working together toward a goal.

As we leave the practice sessions, the vice-principal in charge of student activities shakes his head and marvels at the self-confidence and certainty of the Highland Park students. "They are not embarrassed by anything. They'll

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practice their steps right in the middle of the hall, in front of anyone." When I ask where their self-assurance comes from, he points to the support they get from home. "The girls particularly are made to feel special by their parents. From day one, they are told they're beautiful and talented, . . . and they grow to believe it." This parental support does seem to breed confidence, but it also nourishes a kind of arrogance in these students. Their mannerisms and style reflect the fragile balance of boldness and vulnerability. School clubs seem to provide asylum for the chosen and encourage the development of confidence, as these adolescents turn from their parents to their peers for support.

Keeping the Peace

From the outside, the student population at Highland Park High School appears to be homogeneous. But even a brief look inside reveals the school's diversity. It is not a monolithic student population of bright and rich kids, but one composed of many groups, and separations, divisions, and factionalism become more noticeable the longer one stays. Mr. Petaccia, the vice-principal in charge of discipline, says wearily, "I work hard to keep the peace." And any student can quickly describe the factions and where they "hang out." "The Glass Hall is where the 'scums' hang out. . . . They are the kids who party all the time, . . . both rich and poor kids who are rebelling against their parents." The "Jock Hall" is near the cafeteria. This is where the "sports guys and popular girls hang out." The "Book Foyer," close to the library, is where the "average-to-bright" kids gather, the ones who have "better attitudes and are active in organizations." The music and drama area is the place where students who are devoted to the arts and have become "disciples of the drama teacher gather." Put nicely, these are "interest areas" defined by common habits and traditions.

The administration and faculty are less delicate in their description of factionalism within the school. They point to the old divisions of race, class, and ethnicity. Mr. Petaccia knows the demographic figures by heart, and is candid in his portrait of the turbulence underneath the calm exterior. Standing over six feet, with broad shoulders, heavy girth, and a tough manner, Petaccia is a feared figure in school. A noisy, chaotic cafeteria will suddenly become calm and orderly when he enters the room. Rowdy, delinquent big shots become small, dutiful, and obedient in his presence. He will not tolerate belligerence or intimidation, and stomps out trouble before it happens. That is Mr. Petaccia's public persona. Not far underneath this harsh exterior is a compassionate, caring man, "a Teddy Bear," as he is lovingly referred to by longtime intimates. Some students even sneak a view of this side of him, which makes his sparing punishment seem all the more threatening. He is the favorite subject of a student cartoonist who exaggerates his rubbery features, his big ears, and his belly. In Highland Park, Mr. Petaccia is bigger than life.

In his mid-fifties, Petaccia is growing weary of the school battles and plans to retire in the next couple of years. Born and raised in a working-class Italian neighborhood on Chicago's South Side, Petaccia is still strongly identified with his origins and often feels like a fish out of water in the precious surroundings of Highland Park. He never ceases to be amazed by the arrogance and elitism of

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some students, and is turned off by their overly protective and entitled parents. But he points out that most parents are not like this.

Four years ago Petaccia came reluctantly to Highland Park. He and Benson had been a successful team for several years at the neighboring Deerfield School where the disciplinarian's life was a "lark." A somewhat smaller and newer school, Deerfield had a largely white Protestant population, with "good disciplinary support from home . . . and not too many questions from parents." Occasionally, there would be "instances of minor vandalism, but "no real work to do." Coming to Highland Park was a shock, reminiscent of the struggles Petaccia had when he first began teaching in a Chicago public school in the early fifties, where disciplinary problems often reflected racial strife. He saw at Highland Park similar rigid divisions and the ever-present potential for disruption and violence.

The most recent statistics show that from 50 to 65 percent of the school population are Jewish, about 22 percent Italian, with a smattering of blacks (33) and Latinos (45). The "serious flare-ups in discipline, . . . the deep-seated hostilities," seem to erupt between the Jews and the Italians, who, Petaccia says, "feel that the Jews are the preferred group around here. They get the best teachers, the best counselors, while the Italians are advised to go into vocational work." A third identifiable group consists of 165 students, black and white, from the nearby military base, called the "Fort Sheridan kids," who often feel alienated from the rest of the school. Some have been in as many as seven or eight high schools before coming to Highland Park, and they are reluctant to form attachments and make commitments. There is some racial strife within this group. They band together for protection against the outside world, but among themselves, often fight bitterly. Yet, rarely do they bring their battles to school. Petaccia explains, "The Fort Sheridan kids are suspended the least. . . . Their fathers are military men . . . and very scary. They wouldn't dare get out of line."

The upper-middle-class blacks indigenous to Highland Park see themselves as distinct from the Fort Sheridan blacks and are described by some as "the most alone." The Latinos are also a lonely and peripheral minority. Most are Chicanos whose families live on the fringe of the community, doing menial tasks for their more affluent neighbors. Some have a relatively comfortable and stable existence in the town because they have built reputable lawn services. But they are still regarded as part of the servant class whose existence is dependent on the needs and generosity of the upper middle class. Brown and black faces are few, less than one hundred students altogether, and they do not appear as a cohesive group or a force to be reckoned with.

Dr. Kline, the head of the Counseling Department, also describes the school as divided by factionalism and conflict. He is a sensitive, articulate middle-aged man with a Ph.D. in consulting psychology from Northwestern. He came to Highland Park in the early 1960s to teach social studies. His "love" was international history, with a particular interest in North and West Africa. After several years of teaching, he became increasingly disenchanted by the very present-day orientation of students who were "rebellious, resentful, and disillusioned by the Vietnam War." He found it impossible to get them involved in serious intellectual inquiry, particularly in questions that probed the

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past. Kline escaped from student rebellion in a two-year sojourn at Northwestern for training in psychology. As a historian and psychologist he has watched the changes in school culture, adolescent preoccupations, and community norms over the last fifteen years. No longer moved by political events or ideological rebellion, today's students seem self-centered and withdrawn, detached from the real world. There is a strong focus on academic work and a great concern with grades; but that is accompanied by a kind of intellectual boredom and complacency. Gone also is the school spirit, the sense of belonging, that students felt in the sixties. "Sports events no longer bring people together as they still do in some less affluent communities." Kline describes the deterioration of a sense of community within the school, and says many students feel isolated and alone as they move through their day. Highland Park has become an "exclusionary community, . . . the tone of the school dominated by a superficial sophistication. . . . The primary preoccupations are finding the right clothes, the right kind of car, the right friends." The troubles inside the school reflect a "depressive core in the community," worries Kline. Without goals or traditions to unite their energies, the students' hostility is directed inward, and divisions intensify. "The Italians are offended by the loose affluence of the Jewish kids," and the students from the army base seem "rigid, uptight, and conservative." Differences are exaggerated.

The one thing that seems to unite the student factions is drugs, "the great leveler." Kline has seen a large increase in drug use over the past year after a decade of noticeable decline, and sees it as a poignant and sad effort at reaching out and making connections. Behind the haze of drugs, barriers do not seem as severe, and life does not appear as boring. Drugs also are the focus of family battles that erupt at home and eventually reach the offices of Dr. Kline or one of his eleven staff members. Flagrant drug abuse is often an alarm signal to parents that their son or daughter is in trouble and needs help. Recently, a junior who uses and deals drugs sounded the alarm. He casually left a large quantity of marijuana in the glove compartment of his father's car. When his father discovered it, he was afraid and outraged, and flushed it down the toilet. This precipitated a violent family crisis. Father and son arrived at school the following morning still screaming with rage. "Only when there are crises do some families begin to talk."

Clearly, Kline does not see a cross-section of students in his position as chief psychologist. His view is probably overly jaundiced, his prognosis overly pessimistic. Troubled students arrive at his door, but the troubles are deep and severe. Even with the help of several colleagues, it is not unusual for Kline to hospitalize five students in a week's time. Other less disturbed youngsters get referred to mental health clinics and private psychiatrists and psychotherapists around town whom Kline works hard with to sustain positive relationships. In fact, one could say that Highland Park is an unusually good place for troubled youngsters. Teachers, counselors, and administrators work collectively and seriously to save souls.

Benson is proud of the daily ritual that takes place during the seventh and eighth period of each day. The System for Coordinated Services (SCS) is designed to keep track of all students through the daily screening of attendance

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records. A small group of counselors, social workers, and teachers review the records each day and act on any case where the student has been absent without excuse for more than two days in a row. The first line of action is to notify the student's teachers, who are asked to call the parents. Since each student has several teachers, parents might receive as many as four or five calls from the school in a day, and some defensive parents become antagonistic and resistant. But most parents seem to appreciate the watchfulness and concern, and alliances between parents and teachers often begin with these initial contacts.

Petaccia claims that this stringent system has "reduced truancy a thousand-fold." Highland Park boasts an average attendance rate of 91 percent; 3 percent of the students are absent each day because of illness. Some of the absences can be traced to parental initiatives. "They are professional people who do a lot of traveling, . . . and without the slightest hesitation or guilt, they will take their kids out of school for several days to go with them to the Caribbean or to Europe." Students are not suspended for truancy as they are in many schools. Petaccia explains matter-of-factly, "That is illegal, . . . and every other father in this town is a lawyer, so we have been forced to become very legalistic." The one or two suspensions that Petaccia makes weekly are usually related to possession of marijuana or alcohol. These suspensions are made sparingly, handled very carefully, and Petaccia "follows due process to the letter." "Philosophically," he does not believe in suspensions, but claims that they are an effective "deterrent to fringe groups and a warning to parents."

When the SCS groups uncover more serious student problems in their daily meetings, they are committed to make some immediate decisions. No decision is allowed to be tabled; procrastination is prohibited. "This can be very frustrating," says one SCS teacher, "but it increases everyone's sense of urgency and responsibility." The most severe cases are referred to the Steering Committee, which includes Benson, Kline, Petaccia, the director of special education, and teacher representatives. They review the folders of students who have accumulated more than fifteen unauthorized absenses and make various recommendations for special institutional supports. Parents might be called in for conferences, psychological tests administered, the special education screening committee activated, the curriculum altered, and in some cases students sent to the reading lab for individual help. The range of reinforcements and readjustments that the school makes in response to troubled students is indeed impressive. Nets are spread out to catch those who fall. Kline says proudly, "It is this comprehensive network that distinguishes us from the other schools around here," where students' cries for help may not be heard.

But occasionally a student slips through the cracks, despite all the collective efforts. On the second day of my visit to Highland Park the school was stunned and saddened by the suicide the night before of a young girl with a history of depression. She had been seeing a local psychiatrist for several years, but for the last few months she had temporarily discontinued her psychotherapy and seemed to be showing steady improvement. Since September her life had been invigorated by her work on *Godspell*, a student production that consumed her energies and provided her with an instant group of friends. After *Godspell*, her spirits and enthusiasm declined noticeably. In her distress, she reached out to a

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teacher who had given her special tutorial support in the past, and the school machinery was set in motion. A meeting was scheduled for the following day to review her case. That night, after a visit to her psychiatrist, she killed herself.

The day after, the school buzzed with rumors as students passed on the gruesome news, their faces showing fear and intrigue. The special education teacher wondered aloud, "What did we miss? . . . Where did we go wrong?" as Benson responded tensely to the superintendent's fears of publicity and embarrassment—"I'll check it out. . . . I'll get right on it." But I heard only one teacher speak of it openly and explicitly in class, the drama teacher who had produced *Godspell*. Her words brought tears and looks of terror to the eyes of her students.

> "We've lost a student today who was with us yesterday. We've got to decide where our priorities are. How important are your gold chains, your pretty clothes, your cars? . . . Where were we when she needed us? Foolish old woman that I am, I ask you this because I respect you. . . . While you can still feel, damn it, feel. . . . Reach out to each other."

Toward Conservatism: Academic Divisions

Not only are there divisions among ethnic and religious groups in Highland Park, but there are also clear distinctions made among academic levels and abilities. Almost all of the classes are homogeneously grouped, with vast differences in demands, expectations, and status between the regular and the advanced placement courses. An advanced placement student expressed a common perception when she said, "The AP courses are much, much harder. . . . I can't tell you how easy the regular courses are. . . . The teachers spoon-feed those kids. . . . There is absolutely no challenge." The distinctions among the "hard and easy courses" are vividly reflected in the weightings attached to each. Every course is "leveled," a strategy designed to bring parity across the ability groupings and to ensure that the advanced students are not disadvantaged by the more difficult standards required of them. For the weighting of grade point averages, an A is worth 4.5 in an advanced placement course, 4.25 in a medium level course, and 4 in a remedial course.

The leveling of *all* courses reflects a new system-wide grading policy that has caused some squabbling among the faculty. Some teachers applaud the explicit recognition of categories and view the new policy as a step in the right direction. Others feel strongly that it represents another move away from equality, justice, and integration, and see it as a way to guard and coddle the elite at the expense of those who appear to be less able academically. The 1980 policy is a return to the leveling system used thirty years before at Highland Park. In reaction to the severe categories of the 1950s and early 1960s, the late 1960s and 1970s brought a much more open policy that deemphasized homogeneity. Except for advanced courses in science and math, all classes were heterogeneously grouped.

Old-timers, who have endured all of these shifts in policy and practice, claim that the changes have reflected ideological shifts in the wider community. Mrs. Silver, district-wide head of vocational education, has been at the school since the early 1950s. She left teaching for several years when her children were

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young, but was a close observer of school life when her offspring were attending Highland Park High in the mid-sixties. Mrs. Silver takes a long view of the cultural changes, and seems cool and unruffled by recent policies that plague some of her younger colleagues. She notices a correspondence between periods of experimentation, rebellion, and political involvement among students, and the democratization of academic life. After a conservative period in the early sixties, when "athletics were important, student council was big, . . . and a great emphasis was put on prom queens and cheerleading," students abruptly lost interest in the traditional high-school activities. They moved into what many teachers refer to as "the hippy period," when they rebelled against conservative attitudes reflected in the curriculum and structure of the school. Football and cheerleading were no longer activities of status, it was hard to get students to run for student council, and student garb changed from neat to purposely sloppy. Some teachers remember this period as a time when students were "threatening and menacing," when discipline seemed to break down. "You didn't dare tell kids to pick up the orange peel they had just dropped on the floor. . . . you feared the repercussions." During the tumultuous seventies Mrs. Silver recalls that students turned away from math and science and demanded more nontraditional courses. "There was an awful lot of pressure to do away with sex-bias courses. . . . Girls enrolled . . . in auto mechanics, and boys in child development." A few daring boys chose to take home economics, long the exclusive preserve of "feminine" girls.

Now the pendulum has swung back, and once again students are making the more conservative choices. For the first time in several years a large group of girls showed up for cheerleading tryouts, and the competition was stiff. Seniors brag about the great success of Homecoming Day this year. They worked hard on elaborate floats, costumes, and activities. "It was really special. . . . We had more spirit than any other year. . . . Even the teachers got a positive feeling from it, . . . and for the first time, the Fort Sheridan kids got involved. . . . From the warehouse on the army base they let us borrow a massive truck that used to carry missiles, and we used it for our float." The new glimmer of school spirit is accompanied by a great preoccupation with grades, class standing, and "courses that count." Almost no boys appear in child development and interior design courses anymore, and the girls are content to avoid learning the "masculine" skills of industrial arts and auto mechanics. There is a noticeable return to conservative attitudes and traditional roles.

"Family Living" is the one course in the school that continues to draw a cross-section of students. It is chosen by one third of the senior class, attracting boys and girls equally, and includes students from all ability groups. Part of the attraction is the teacher, Ms. Taylor, described by her colleagues as "vivacious, energetic, extremely competent, and demanding," and by students as "the epitome of someone who cares. . . . She comes up with good ideas and makes you feel like a person, not a number." Another reason for the course's popularity seems to be related to its perceived relevance to the lives of adolescents. They enter the course hoping it will clarify some of their aching problems, answer their tough questions, and make them feel less alone. These are heavy expectations, unlikely to be met in the context of any single course. Ms. Taylor also notices a recent turn toward conservatism in student expectation of the class content. In the past they would come anticipating support for

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their antisocial and promiscuous behavior, wanting reinforcement in pulling away from the confining values and prohibitions of their parents. Now they seem to seek a kind of stability and reassurance from the course. "They talk more about building relationships than about sexuality, . . . and recognize how unsatisfactory sex is without friendship," says Ms. Taylor.

The class straggles into the classroom after the bell. Students arrange themselves in an uneven circle, broken at the front of the room by the blackboard and teacher's desk and a large overhead projector that Ms. Taylor sits next to during the discussions. A woman in her mid-thirties, Ms. Taylor is strikingly blond, slightly plump, and dressed in a white pants suit and high heels. She is confident in manner and smoothly articulate. She never talks down to the students but reveals in her attitudes and behavior a genuine respect for them and a real concern for "what's on their minds." The course is highly structured, with a clear outline, focus, and rationale. The difficult and messy material seems to demand the imposition of structure.

The day I visit the class Ms. Taylor is concluding a unit on "love relationships" and is going over the outline and assignments for the next unit on "sexuality." "In our sexuality unit we will be looking at issues of femininity and masculinity. . . . Are your parents comfortable talking about sexuality? . . . I have recognized some great differences in the background of students. . . . This will not be a local course in sex. We'll be looking more at your questions. . . . There's a whole lot we don't know. . . . The potential for you to do research on sexuality is vast." During her opening statement most students respond to her obvious enthusiasm with looks of boredom, disinterest, and laziness. Bodies are slouched, eyes half-closed, and there is constant background conversation.

The outline for the sexuality unit is distributed, and Ms. Taylor goes through the list of research paper topics, giving some background information on each major area of inquiry. "Sex education is a controversial subject. . . . At what age should it be taught? . . . Who should teach it? . . . A group of parents in southern Illinois protested against a private counseling service that was offering sex education to teenagers." Hearing this, a boy in the back of the room says vaguely, "You could sue them. . . . They said they'd get a lot of money." Ms. Taylor, not understanding the connection between her comments and his remark, tries respectfully to decipher what he means. The boy grows impatient with her questioning and withdraws from the conversation. There are other examples of miscommunication. Ms. Taylor uses the word *surrogate* and asks whether anyone knows what it means. No one responds, so she says, "It means 'substitute,' " and explains the increasing phenomenon of surrogate-mothering. One student, who seems to understand, asks, "Is it legal?" to which Ms. Taylor responds, "It depends on the state." "I saw that on *Dallas*," offers another girl. The conversation is quickly diverted to a more animated discussion of *Dallas* plots, none showing any connection to surrogate-mothering. Ms. Taylor's attempts at explanation are constantly being interrupted by unrelated conversations among students. A redhead-

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ed girl exclaims to her neighbor, "You know what Roger just said about you? He said, 'Look at Myra's tits' "—which causes laughter all around.

The class deteriorates further when Ms. Taylor begins to go over the details of the written assignment. "A research paper is other people's ideas about a topic you have chosen. . . . The narrower your topic, the better. . . . I don't want it any longer than three typewritten pages, double-spaced. . . . You've got to learn to cut out the garbage that doesn't say anything. . . . You need to learn research skills." For the first time students take out their notebooks and write down when the paper is due and "what they have to know." It is the first time that everyone attends. As Ms. Taylor goes over the details of footnoting, some students grow increasingly frustrated. There is a rising crescendo of noise that the teacher ignores as she says, coolly, "Are there any questions?" "Yeah," answers an angry male voice. "Why do we have to do this? . . . We've already had enough papers. . . . I know enough to get by." In the midst of her halfhearted attempt to respond to his frustration, the bell sounds to end the period, and Ms. Taylor is besieged with another angry assault from a girl filing out of the classroom. Her voice is shrill, and she seems to be losing control. "This is a dumb course. I can't stand it!" Still patient, Ms. Taylor says, "Well, why do you say that? Is it because you don't want to do the work?" As the girl brushes furiously past her, she says plaintively, "Don't walk away. Communicate. Well, if not today, communicate tomorrow."

Throughout the entire period Ms. Taylor remained cool, patient, and respectful. Although there were a few students who seemed tuned in to her and occasionally asked relevant and substantive questions, most of them appeared lazy and disgruntled. I am amazed at the abuse Ms. Taylor is able to tolerate and absorb, and ask her about that after class. For the first time she looks discouraged and frustrated, and begins by excusing the outburst of the girl who left the class yelling at her. "I think she is under enormous pressure from home to achieve academically. This is her senior year, and her parents are insisting that she get good grades. . . . But she is not very capable intellectually and is struggling in all of her courses. . . . She is afraid she won't get into college and is having to face her inadequacies for the first time." Ms. Taylor seems only slightly embarrassed that I have witnessed this exchange; she does not seem to have taken the student's fury personally. Her first response was to reach out to her, then to try to search for the origins of her behavior.

But Ms. Taylor does recognize the more general difficulties in this class and speaks of it as a "hard group to teach." She thinks her problems stem from the broad range of academic abilities and the large number of students with learning and emotional difficulties. Remembering the seating pattern, she is able to identify students at both extremes of the academic continuum, and points to a large core of the class who have been labeled as having learning disabilities and behavior disorders. We recall together that the latter group had been responsible for the persistent disruptions throughout the class, and that the former had mostly remained silent, occasionally trying to penetrate the chaos with a question or comment.

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Most teachers in Highland Park do not have to face mixtures of students or struggle with finding a level of instruction that will not exclude any subgroup of the class. In Ms. Taylor's course the intellectual content seemed to be defined by her images of the most capable students, but the exchanges and tone were primarily shaped by those who did not understand. In the end, frustration developed, and no one's needs seemed to be met.

In her course "Literary Persuasion" Ms. Wood does not confront this problem. Her course, reserved for the advanced placement students, is strikingly different in substance and mood from "Family Living." The room is traditionally arranged with rows of desks and chairs, and the teacher's desk sits center front. Four of the twenty-five students are girls. The room is quiet during most of the class except for occasional whispering among neighbors who seem to be making side comments related to the general discussion. The conversation between teacher and students is rarely intense and animated, but they are on the same wavelength, and there is an orderly process of raising hands, questioning, and commenting. The flow of the discussion is directed by Ms. Wood, but students often initiate lines of thinking or politely challenge her interpretations. These are the students who expect to attend the prestigious Eastern schools. It is from groups like this that Highland Park's twenty-three Merit Scholars of last year came.

Ms. Wood is a short, curlyheaded woman, with a wry wit and an intense love of literature. She shows me "the original copy" of the book they are working with, tattered and worn from its many readings. With book in hand, she stands and leans casually against the front of her desk as she thoughtfully and carefully forms her first comments. The class seems to anticipate and enjoy her reflective, ruminative style. Before beginning the discussion, she remembers "the word for the day," written on the board, *phlegmatic*. "It is similar to *sanguine*. . . . Let's have a good sentence. . . . What does it mean when you refer to a human being as phlegmatic, Lydia?" "Slow to act," responds Lydia without hesitation. This is a ritual that begins each day, and most seem prepared to offer the answer.

The discussion centers on Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a book the class has been reading and analyzing for the past two weeks. As they find the passages in the book, Ms. Wood begins, "This is a very didactic part of the book. Stowe uses Sinclair really as a mouthpiece. . . . His major character flaw is his indolence. . . . Don't you think he also represents a general human flaw? . . . Where he brings in his own opinion is in the analysis. . . . A slaveowner might have a great deal to lose, at least from his own perspective. . . . Remember we have said that we can't judge the characters by our own standards, that we must see them in historical and cultural context." To bolster her analysis, Ms. Wood reads excerpts from the text. She almost seems to be having a conversation with herself when she exclaims in the midst of her reading, "Interesting idea, an unorthodox notion."

The discussion fastens on the author's attitudes toward slavery, as Ms. Wood asks students to contrast Stowe with Frederick Douglass, whose autobiography they have recently read. The class is silent and tentative, so the teacher leaps in and says, "Stowe mitigates—Aha! One of your

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vocabulary words from last week—the horror of slavery, but Douglass's book is too extreme. . . . It makes people feel uncomfortable, and if you are writing a book of persuasion, you don't want to turn people off." These notions of the limits of truth and the uses of distortion are clearly themes of the course that Ms. Wood returns to often. "Next week you'll be reading Saul Alinsky's *Rules for Radicals*, . . . a Machiavellian essay that takes the extreme position . . . that distortion is all right if it is for honorable ends." Some students, among them all of the girls, are listening and taking notes; others are yawning and clearly bored by the esoteric distinctions.

Perhaps in response to the faraway looks in her students' eyes, Ms. Wood brings the discussion closer to home. She is trying to reveal the contemporary examples of enslavement all around them. "Having a slave in Highland Park is not the thing to do. . . . It's also "slightly" illegal. But can't you picture how some of the folks here would deal with slaves, . . . see them talk with people who work for them? . . . They are just as despicable as Stowe's characters!" Maybe they hear the urgency in her voice, but the students' faces show no change. I cannot see the face of the one black boy in the class who sits in the front by the window, but I project pain onto him. How must he feel as this conversation swirls about him? And how does he experience the disinterest and distance of his peers?

The interest of all students becomes suddenly charged when Ms. Wood says, "I'll give you a clue, . . . in fact, I'll *tell* you one of the questions on the next exam. . . . On the basis of your reading of *The Jungle*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Frederick Douglass*, and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which would you rather be, a slave or an English laborer? . . . You have to examine carefully the question of freedom." Hands are immediately raised, and responses come from all corners. As students struggle for "the right answer," they do not seem to believe Ms. Wood totally when she claims there is no correct response. She is looking for a reasoned argument, a thoughtful interpretation, and creative insight. They are trying to come up with what they think she wants to hear.

The students in "Literary Persuasion" have a sense of their special status in the school. They are part of the elite, the top group of academic achievers, and their lofty position protects them from the distractions of those academically less competent. In a school of such great size, students search for pockets of safety and connection. Academic excellence insures some degree of special treatment and separation from the masses, but the most protected spot in the school seems to be the Drama Department, where students receive heavy doses of nurturing and love from Ms. Newbury.

At fifty-one, she is just as theatrical and enthusiastic as she was when she won the Best Actress award at the University of Wisconsin thirty years ago. With gray-blond hair swept back from her face, a voice that projects across footlights and into the balcony, and a carriage that is both confident and elegant, Ms. Newbury is a seductive force to her students. They crowd around her like disciples, worshipping the ground she walks on. In turn, she offers bountiful affection and personal caring. Her graduates return year after year for

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her hugs and reinforcement, and the student theater is a home away from home for Newbury's special group.

The student theater is a large room with a stage, scattered chairs, pieces of discarded scenery, and rugs to lie on. Students spread out on the floor and sit on tables and chairs as they listen intently to Ms. Newbury's words. She weaves a web of intimacy.

> "My dears, this place offers an infusion—good word?—of comradeship. It is a built-in family, . . . a built-in connection. . . . We will always have this tie. I look around for you because this is your place, your space, . . . a magic place. . . . All our ghosts are here."

The delivery is perfect, her voice soothing and soft. No doubt, it is a performance, but it is also experienced as genuine by the students, who absorb every word. Gone is the grubbing for grades and the cramming for tests. For this moment the students seem far away from the rugged competition.

But intimacy and good feeling are not all Ms. Newbury is after. She is also determined that her students be introduced to the rigors and demands of acting, and her standards are very high. She is fond of saying, "This is information that may be beyond you yet—you are so young—but, you see, I trust you enough to tell you this now and I know one day it will penetrate, . . . and you will understand."

> The class has just finished a screening of *Rebel without a Cause*, a film classic starring James Dean and Natalie Wood. Students sprawled in front of the movie screen are still dazed by the powerful drama, when Ms. Newbury begins her elegant critique of the film. Her comments are a mixture of lessons in technique, morality, and dramatic expression.
>
> On morality: "I noticed you laughing at the black maid. Why? Why? She is a paid housekeeper in that very wealthy home. . . . She was the *only* one there to love and care for James Dean. Do you find that funny? I find that touching and unbelievable."
>
> On technique: "There are all kinds of remarkable things about this film. Watch James Dean, and you'll have a minicourse in acting. He does things naturally that others of us would have to practice over and over. He's never, never melodramatic."
>
> On emotional expression: "When Dean crumbles into tears and embraces the man, our first response is denial. We joke, experience disbelief. You say, 'I don't believe it. I'm numb. I refuse to feel this.' . . . And then it hits you. . . . This, my dears, was a hard show to see. I wanted you to listen to Natalie Wood. Remember she said, 'I've been looking for someone to love me. Now I've found someone to love, and it's easy.' Listen to her words carefully. Learn it, and learn it soon."

Ms. Newbury's words express themes that haunt the life of this school and this community but that often go unnoticed and unexpressed. She beseeches her students to become conscious of the hidden dogma, to work against the

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psychic malaise, bigotry, and isolation of their lives, and oppose the priorities and values of their families and culture.

Like most public schools, Highland Park reflects the community that it is part of. But here the institutional boundaries between school and town appear even more penetrable than usual. Parents take an unusually active and initiating role in supporting and challenging the school. The reverberations of family crises, community conflicts, and economic cycles are felt within the walls of the school. Dr. Kline judges that most of the severely troubled children come from families of divorce, separation, or desertion. "It is not unusual in this town to have a mother living in a $200,000 house with four kids, and a father living separately in a high-rise apartment in Chicago. With more affluence, there is more to lose. Because there are plentiful resources, people feel they should be able to handle the stress, and are panicked when they can't. . . . I've seen some kids go from riches to rags in the midst of divorce. . . . There is enormous loss and anger."

Beyond the cases of extreme crisis, however, one senses that life within the school mirrors, and perhaps exaggerates, the culture and tone of the wider community. The divisions of race, ethnicity, and class, for example, are dramatically played out in battles between Italians and Jews and the more subtle exclusion of blacks and Chicanos. And the general turn toward conservatism in American society is expressed in the building of more extreme hierarchies, a preoccupation with grades, and vigorous competition between students. Some observers claim that the healthy separations between community and school have noticeably eroded during the past several years. With barriers down, the school no longer serves as an asylum, a retreat from the real world, for adolescents. Students do not perceive of school as a place where they can feel a part of a closely knit and accepting community. In fact, in school it is more likely that they will experience a heightened sense of exclusion and separation.

Parents who were themselves students at Highland Park worry that "the tone" of the school has changed dramatically. Students turn away from it rather than toward it. Everyone notices the great increase in students who work after school, not so much because they need the money, but because they want to feel productive and useful, and because they want to feel connected to something larger than themselves. Benson comments nostalgically on changes in the centrality of the school experience, "School used to be the focus. Now it's the satellite in students' lives."

There are some indications that students are beginning to feel the need for a more invigorating school life, some indications that they want to help create a place to identify with and feel proud of. This year's Homecoming was initiated by students, and they were pleased with the crowds it attracted, the recognition it got, and the way it pulled people together. The enthusiasm for school clubs and afterschool activities reflects the same wish by students for connection and involvement. As one student put it, "I like the extra stuff, not the inner stuff of school." In the afterschool activities we see a kind of student camaraderie, responsibility, and initiative that are not evident in most classes during the school day. The strong, aggressive girl who is directing more than one hundred

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of her peers in the annual student-written production seems bored and unchallenged in her psychology class. In courses where students seem to be spirited and involved there is often a larger network of relationships that sustains them beyond the commitments of a single course. The Drama Department is such a place of refuge.

Most students are not captured by these involvements, however. The clubs, activities, and networks only include those who are highly skilled, determined, or well connected. For the outsiders, life at Highland Park can be disconnected and lonely. It is not the fault of teachers, who work hard at challenging the *status quo*. They see the connections between the gruelling competition, parental pressure, and student isolation, and they fight the aggressive rivalries by pointing their students toward the substance of the inquiry. Most teachers appear unusually responsive to, and respectful of, students, actively encouraging relationships that will counter the depersonalization of the setting. When students show distress signals, teachers are quick to pick them up. Dr. Kline claims, "My work would not be possible without the active support of the teachers. If I have a student who needs help, I can count on getting the support and cooperation of his teachers. They respond confidentially and professionally."

The top students, geared toward high-powered colleges, receive a similar kind of unusual care and recognition. Their special courses provide sources of identification and prestige, and their trajectory of achievement is applauded by the wider community. They have high visibility and acclaim; in fact, their success shapes the preeminent public image of Highland Park. But for those students who are not dramatic achievers—the regular kids—or those in the midst of a visible crisis, Highland Park is a place to pass through unnoticed. The structure and tone of the school encourage their invisibility. Against the landscape of affluence and plenty, their neglect seems pointedly distressing.

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PHILIP W. JACKSON

Comprehending a Well-run Comprehensive: A Report on a Visit to a Large Suburban High School

> It is possible to make valid judgments about American secondary education, but only school by school.
>
> —James B. Conant
> *The American High School Today*

HIGHLAND PARK HIGH SCHOOL, a four-year comprehensive secondary school, is said to be an exemplar of its type. It is located in the village of Highland Park, a posh suburban lakeshore community bordering the western shore of Lake Michigan, about twenty-five miles north of Chicago. I spent three days there recently with the explicit goal of trying to understand the basis of its fine reputation.

The student body of Highland Park High School (hereafter HPHS), currently 2,417, comes from Highland Park itself, whose population is predominantly Jewish, with white Anglo-Saxon Protestants as the second largest category, and a sprinkling of Italian, Irish, Polish, Hispanic, and black families. It comes also from the neighboring town of Highwood, whose residents are largely of Italian descent, and from nearby Fort Sheridan, an army installation whose population contains a high percentage of blacks. Thus the school is much more diverse—ethically, racially, and even culturally—than the community in which it is located. Somewhat more than 50 percent of this year's students are Jewish and 35 percent are Roman Catholic, with a growing number of the latter (5 to 10 percent of the student body this year) Spanish-speaking. Many HPHS students, particularly, but by no means exclusively, those from Fort Sheridan, have not grown up in the area. Moreover, a good number of these relative newcomers (again, the heaviest concentration being among those whose fathers are in the military) have transferred from other high schools. The student body thus has within it a noticeable group of young people who are more or less strangers to the area, belonging to one or another of the school's minority groups.

The physical plant of HPHS is a brick-and-glass labyrinth that requires some time to learn one's way around. A three-story structure called Main Building faces the street; it houses administrative offices and classrooms for most of the academic subjects. Behind and to the sides are eight or nine additional units that provide space for a gymnasium and art, music, and shop classes, and for

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facilities of a more general nature, such as the cafeteria, the auditorium, and the library (called the Instructional Materials Center at HPHS). The total complex is connected by a network of broad corridors and stairwells that makes possible indoor access to any instructional area, office, or general facility.

In the open spaces between several of the buildings are small courtyards with patches of lawn and a few low concrete benches. Two playing fields and two parking lots, one for faculty and visitors, the other for students (seniors only), are on the grounds adjacent to the school itself. The athletic stadium, used chiefly for interscholastic sports, is located some distance away in another part of town.

The administrative staff consists of a principal, who has overall responsibility for the school's operation; three assistant principals, each with clearly defined duties relating to discipline, scheduling, attendance, student activities, and the like; and an administrative aide who reports to the assistant principal in charge of attendance and discipline. The faculty of 170 men and women is divided into ten departments, each with its own chairman. Included are those standard divisions found in almost every high school of any size—departments of English, mathematics, science, foreign language, social studies, fine arts, and physical education. There are in addition departments of applied arts, in charge of the school's vocational program; special education, which manages the programs of students with special educational needs arising from a disability of one sort or another; and counseling, comprised of a chairman, nine counselors, a college consultant, two social workers, and a psychologist.

In a brochure designed to acquaint college admission offices with the kind of school HPHS is today, the curriculum is described as "comprehensive and innovative." As if to substantiate both, there follows a list of some twenty or so courses and programs, beginning with "Advanced Study in the Arts" and ending with "Experience Based Education." Courses that are indisputably "academic" in orientation, such as "Psychology" and "Advanced Behavioral Science," as well as others that are just as clearly "vocational," such as "Distributive Education" and "Home Economics Related Occupations," attest to the curriculum's comprehensiveness. To drive the point home, the list contains two items—"English as a Second Language" and "Spanish/English Bilingual Program"—that speak to the cultural diversity of the school's student body, thus underscoring both the fact and the necessity of a diverse curriculum. Courses such as "Ecology," "Child Development," and "Computer Technology," which have begun to appear in secondary schools only within the past decade or so, back up the claim of innovation. These newer offerings, we are assured, do not displace anything essential, for all of the items included in the list are "in addition to the standard secondary school offerings."

The plenitude of both the innovative and the traditional and the comprehensiveness of the total curriculum—something for everyone—become even more evident in the school's sixty-five page Curriculum Bulletin used by the students in selecting their programs. Put out annually, the bulletin contains a complete listing and brief descriptions of all available courses, together with information on graduation requirements, methods of evaluation, registration, and scheduling. The total list is truly impressive: 165 courses that may be taken at the school itself during the regular academic year, plus 42 more at the Lake County Vocational Center, a shared facility to which groups of juniors and seniors from

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HPHS and other schools are bused each day for training in occupational pursuits as diverse as ornamental horticulture and spot-welding. In addition, the bulletin lists 18 courses at nearby Deerfield High School, everything from "Consumer Economics" to "Political Science," that are open to HPHS students.[1] On its final page are 27 courses available during a six-week summer program. The total number of curricular listings is an astonishing 252.

But numbers do not begin to convey the diversity of subject matter covered by such a curriculum. To grasp its epistemological scope requires an inspection of the full panoply of course titles. Nothing seems left out. From "Film Making" to "Family Living," from "Cosmetology" to "Creative Writing," the list includes almost every conceivable subject that one might expect to find in a comprehensive secondary school curriculum, plus a good number, such as "Synchronized Swimming" and "Russian History," that even a person familiar with such schools might not have predicted.

As if all this diversity were not rich enough fare, the curriculum is topped off by an equally diverse extracurricular program of competitive sports and clubs. The latter include the usual assortment of afterschool activities, such as the student newspaper, the yearbook, foreign language clubs, and the like, but several less conventional organizations, such as the Rifle Club, the Computer Club, the Archaeology-History Club, and the Ski Club, are included as well. As with the curriculum in general, there is hardly a teenage hobby or interest (save sex, of course!) that is unrepresented.

The curricular variety at HPHS evokes a host of images, all having to do with gastronomic gluttony: a well-stocked larder, the menu of a fine restaurant, a cafeteria line extending to infinity, a Swedish smorgasbord, a cornucopia. And each one seems to fit as an analogy in at least two respects. Each suggests near-endless variety and the freedom to choose. How better might we describe the contents of the Curriculum Bulletin than as a veritable smorgasbord of intellectual delights, a cultural groaning board from which students are free to pick and choose as their appetites and interests dictate?

Yet what looks like an almost perfect analogy, upon close inspection turns out not to be. Though intellectual appetites and interests do play a part in determining what each HPHS student will put on his or her plate, there are real constraints on that. What these constraints are is essential to understanding the true character of HPHS and of comprehensive high schools in general.

First, the school has minimal distribution requirements; that is, students cannot graduate without a specified number of credits distributed over a prescribed set of curricular domains. Translated into semesters of study, this requirement at present calls for eight semesters of physical education, six semesters of English, two semesters each of mathematics, science, and U.S. history, and one semester of health education. Moreover, the number of curricular areas covered by these requirements has been increased to include social studies (in addition to U.S. history), fine arts, and the applied arts. Beginning with this year's sophomores, future graduates of HPHS must also have taken at least two semesters of social studies and one semester each of fine and applied arts.

But what do these requirements mean in terms of a student's total program? At HPHS, as in most schools, one course studied for one semester equals one credit. Forty-one credits are required for graduation. The present minimal

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distribution requirement fences in twenty-one of these credits, as it soon will twenty-five. Even now slightly more than half of a student's curricular choices are not entirely free, and that fraction is about to increase.

A second source of curricular constraint, almost too obvious to mention, is created by many courses—particularly in mathematics, foreign language, and science—being ordered sequentially. Algebra comes before Geometry, Latin I before Latin II, Typing I before Typing II, and so on. Moreover, at HPHS several of the advanced courses in science have prerequisites that include some mathematics as well as introductory science. And as described in the Curriculum Bulletin, many of the prerequisites call not simply for the completion of some prior course or courses, but for their *successful* completion with a grade of B or better. A good number of the more challenging courses at HPHS, therefore, can only be chosen by students who have earned the right to make that choice, a not unexpected arrangement, but one that is not apparent to the casual admirer of the intellectual riches described in the bulletin.

Related to this is a third constraint, rather more complicated and subtle in its workings. It grows out of the ability groups employed in many areas of the curriculum, particularly standard academic subjects of English, math, science, and foreign language. Placement in one or another "level" (there are now as many as five levels in some subjects, but they will be reduced to three) is based, as the bulletin explains, "on criteria such as teacher's recommendation, previous grades, and standardized test scores." What this means in practice is that certain students are "invited" or "encouraged" by their teachers or counselors to enroll in "Level I" or "Level II" courses, and others are not. Technically, no one is absolutely barred from such placement; any student may enroll himself or herself in higher ability sections if he or she chooses. However, the chairman of the Counseling Department reports that very few students act against the advice they are given. "The recommendation from teachers and the student's counselor is usually too strong to disregard," he explained.

What at first seems like an unlimited selection of curricular goodies available to all—a boundless cafeteria with seconds, thirds, and fourths allowed, and no cashier at the end—is on close examination not that way at all. Some of the available bounty is out of reach to some in the line; some of it must be put on the tray in sequence or not at all; and there are prescribed limits to the size of the tray, the amount of time it takes to get to the end of the line, and the essential ingredients of the well-balanced meal everyone must consume no matter how much additional junk food is piled on top. To round out the corrected image, we must see our curricular tray-loader as being advised by teachers and counselors along the way (not to mention parents and other well-intentioned adults) who do not hesitate to voice opinions about what would and would not be good to ingest.

But the image as corrected is now too cynical to serve any further heuristic purpose and is best abandoned. Before doing so, however, and before leaving the topic of constraints on curricular choice at HPHS, for now at least, let me clarify the intention of my remarks.

I did not intend to imply that there is anything deceptive about these constraints. All are quite openly acknowledged and above board. Nor did I intend to imply that there is little freedom in the selection of a program of

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study. With nearly half the choices unfettered by distribution requirements, and with dozens of offerings left to choose from (even after the constraints of sequence and level have eliminated certain alternatives), no one could possibly argue that students at HPHS, even students of low academic ability, are straitjacketed in their selection of courses. Yet, and this is the message that *was* intended, taste and interest alone do not sufficiently explain how the students are sorted into the two hundred and fifty or so curricular "boxes" that are theoretically available. Ability and effort seem to be two of the forces at work in determining that final arrangement. What some of the others might be is a topic I shall return to later.

The school is a smoothly running institution, led by a competent team of administrators and staffed by a conscientious and professional cadre of teachers and counselors. Almost everyone I spoke with—administrators, teachers, and students—seemed to share that general opinion and to be reasonably content with the school. This is not to say that neither I nor those I spoke with saw nothing whatsoever that might be considered problematic about the school and its current operation. The principal acknowledges that there are some students who "get lost" and "fall through the cracks" of the various programs. He worries about such students, many of whom seem to be transferees from other high schools. He also complains that there are a few weak teachers who are "almost impossible to get rid of," and feels uneasy over the school being "more impersonal and more of an institution" than it once was. (He returned to HPHS as principal four years ago, having been a social studies teacher there for more than a decade, beginning in the mid-fifties.) At the same time he has high praise for the school as it operates today, claiming that it is "better for kids" than it had been in the past. "It's a better educational program. More is offered by better teachers," he explained.

This same outlook, a recognition of continuing problems combined with a general spirit of contentment, was shared by other teachers and administrators. The chairman of the Foreign Language Department began his interview with me by mildly griping about the classes in his department becoming too large (a few sections in beginning French and Spanish now have thirty or more students, whereas the limit used to be twenty-five). He was soon boasting about the school and describing teaching conditions within it as "ideal." "Look at the halls," he said, "They're empty. The kids are in classes. They want to learn. They demand a quality education. And they get it. And we teachers get what we want, too. We have unlimited supplies. Compared to schools in other areas, we have nothing to complain about."

And so it went with every single member of the staff I spoke with. When asked about the current state of the school, the answer was always the same. Little problems? Yes. Big problems? No. Compared to other schools in which they had worked or had heard about? No problems at all.

The absence of serious problems at HPHS was laid to a variety of sources and conditions. "Strong leadership," "a responsible school board," "teachers with a professional attitude," "the kids," "the times" are answers that turned up repeatedly. Perhaps they are all correct, for it seems that a combination of conditions accounts for the smoothness of the school's operation and the sense of

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contentment expressed by so many connected with the school. The school board, the administration, the teachers, the curriculum, the students, the times—all seem to contribute to making the school what it is today. Each seems necessary, none sufficient.

If, then, there is a lesson to be learned at HPHS, something all those who seek to improve American education should heed, it is this: All it takes to produce a fine high school is the following:

1. Start with a community that places a high value on education and whose taxpayers are willing to bear the costs of a high-quality school system.
2. Elect a school board whose members are more or less united on issues having to do with the quality of the schools in their system.
3. Hire a superintendent with a liberal educational outlook, one who knows how to pick able principals and is willing to give them sufficient freedom to do a good job.
4. Have the superintendent choose a principal who is willing to delegate authority to a well-trained administrative staff and who also knows how to win and maintain the confidence of teachers.
5. Assemble a reasonably well-educated faculty who carry out their duties in a workmanlike manner.
6. Design a curriculum that is both comprehensive and innovative, and an extracurriculum that has something appealing to almost everyone.
7. Fill the school with a student body that on the whole accepts the legitimacy of the entire enterprise and most of whose members genuinely want to learn.

The trouble with this recipe is its obvious banality. It is like pointing out that good cooking requires nothing more than the proper ingredients, artfully combined—a mere truism and no lesson at all. If that is the most that can be learned from a visit to HPHS, I told myself at the end of the first day, the trip was not worth it.

At that point the level of my curiosity about the school had sunk to near zero. There was so little that was problematic about its overall workings. Rarely, if ever, was I prompted to ask, "Why are things done in this manner?" "How did this come about?" "What's this for?" Never did I wonder, "Who in the world would ever have thought of doing things *that* way?" Everything was so predictable, so understandable, so sensible—and, consequently, so dull.

Yet the latter is not entirely true. There was much of at least passing interest, a good deal of it related to the minor vexations expressed by teachers and administrators. I saw, for example, the rather hippie-looking bunch of kids huddled by a van in the parking lot, and thought these might be a few of the lost souls whose disaffection so worried the principal. I noticed that two boys who had been fighting and who were brought into the Attendance Office while I was there were a black and a Hispanic, and I could not help wondering how deep and pervasive the social cleavages were that might have precipitated that

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conflict. I spied a teacher with tight lips and angry look sitting alone in the teacher's lunchroom, and I thought she must be among those the principal would love to get rid of if he could. And there was more, much more, that caught my eye at almost every turning.

But somehow, the thoughts occasioned by such sights were merely distracting, for their pursuit seemed to lead away from, rather than toward, the fulfillment of my purpose. I had not come to peer into the lives of individuals or collect material for a work of fiction. My goal was simply to find out how a good school gets that way. And the longer I stayed, the clearer it became that the answer was, just about the way you would expect it to.

In retrospect, as astute readers have probably guessed, my momentary sense of boredom was a function of my own shortsightedness. I failed to find much that was problematic about the way HPHS works because I took for granted the underlying framework of assumptions, customs, and conventions, and whatever else it is that makes what is happening there seem so sensible to us today. I did not pause to question all those features of schooling that have become part of the landscape, that have become so much a part of our current way of understanding what schools are like that we find it hard to imagine them being otherwise. Yet on reflection, it is easy to see that these "givens" are by no means the way things have to be; indeed, most were at one time otherwise. There is no guarantee that they will remain as they are today. Almost all of these features of schooling could *become* problematic if we allowed them to, and they might well become so in the future, whether we want them to or not.

Consider, for instance, what constitutes a general education as spelled out by the courses students are required to take in our secondary schools. At HPHS this requirement at present comprises a little more than half the credits needed for graduation. It is not an unusual requirement. Most other comprehensive high schools have it, and it seems not to have changed much in recent years. When James B. Conant conducted his well-known study of American high schools in the late 1950s, he found that most of the schools he visited had general education requirements that used up just about half of the credits required for graduation. Conant himself recommended

> four years of English, three or four years of social studies—including two years of history (one of which should be American history) and a senior course in American problems or American government—one year of mathematics in the ninth grade (algebra or general mathematics), and at least one year of science in the ninth or tenth grade, which might well be biology or general physical science.[2]

Although he called for a somewhat stiffer set of requirements than is in effect at HPHS today, his recommendations, at least in scope, are not much at variance with what is almost standard across the country and has been for some time.

But where does such a standard come from, and why do we feel so comfortable with it? Why should not general education requirements absorb three quarters of the credits needed for graduation instead of half? Why not all? Why should a school supported by tax dollars do *anything* but provide a general education for all?

The answers to such questions are obviously complicated. They call upon an understanding of history, economics, politics, philosophy, and a lot else. To see how local definitions of general education come into being, it is necessary to

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examine the dynamics of decision-making at an almost microscopic level, where chance and coincidence play a part as well.[3]

But on logical and empirical grounds, or both, such questions have no answers. There is no universally valid response to what general education is or how much of it people should have by the time they finish high school. There are simply answers, such as "about half the credits required for graduation," that sound sensible or "right" to us now. How long they will remain so is hard to say.

Another of these currently unquestioned premises is embodied in the widespread assumption that variety and innovation are desirable qualities in a high-school curriculum. The principal of HPHS stated this belief explicitly when he said the school is better today than in the past because it now offers "more courses." The same view is reflected in the brochure describing the curriculum of HPHS as "comprehensive and innovative."

But what makes it better to have 252 courses available to students than 200 or 100 or even 50, for that matter? And why should a high school offer courses in film-making, synchronized swimming, and other such exotic subjects? Keeping the students happy, or individualizing instruction, or remaining *au courant* with the latest developments in the growth of knowledge are answers that rest on prior assumptions and are vulnerable to further questioning. The pursuit of variety and innovation in the high-school curriculum is not completely without defense. But what makes such a goal defensible is something other than cold logic and hard facts. Perhaps this is an obvious point, but it is worth making nevertheless, because many of us go along too easily with expanding the high-school curriculum in the name of innovation.

A third aspect of a school like HPHS, one largely taken for granted but increasingly questioned in the past two or three decades, relates to the forces that determine which curricular pathways a student will move along. We have already seen that the process involves far more than having each student select whatever set of courses he or she likes. Beyond distribution requirements, prerequisites and sequence, and ability and motivation is the recognition that there are demographic correlates of curricular choice. At HPHS Jewish students are overrepresented (in relation to their percentage in the student body at large) in the more advanced academic courses and in the higher ability sections of courses that are "tracked," whereas Italians, blacks, and Hispanics are underrepresented in those same courses. The reverse is true in the most vocationally oriented courses and in the lower level sections of the basic subjects.

When I called attention to this feature of life at HPHS, both teachers and administrators responded in ways that revealed how social conscience is assuaged in the face of glaring inequities that potentially could occasion charges of racial or ethnic prejudice. Essentially, the explanatory strategy was to play down the importance of the differences and to make them appear "natural." Those interviewed almost invariably began by pointing out that the separation of students by racial or religious or ethnic characteristics was by no means hard and fast. Yes, there is such a tendency to group students in this way, most acknowledged, but they assured me that exceptions to the rule were plentiful, so plentiful in fact that the general tendency hardly seemed worth noting. To drive this point home, one teacher withdrew from her desk drawer the class

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roster for a vocational course and pointed out to me the number of "Jewish names" on the list.

I pressed the teachers to explain why even the general tendency existed; few, if any, mentioned group differences in ability. Instead, they focused on the effects of two environmental conditions: prior schooling and the influence of the family. Not all entering students at HPHS had an elementary school education of equal quality, I was told. Many Italian students, for example, had attended parochial schools, where instruction in math, science, and foreign language was reputed to be of lesser quality than in many of the local public schools, which a high percentage of the Jewish students attended. Continuous changes of school as their fathers were transferred from one military post to another explained the relatively poor performance of many of the black students from Fort Sheridan. Finally, it was almost invariably pointed out to me that Jewish families more strongly encouraged academic excellence than did families of other ethnic groups. These conditions in combination, all of them beyond the power of the school itself to do much about, yielded a distribution with undeniable ethnic and racial shadings.

I fully believe all of these conditions to be true. Yet the question is not whether they are an adequate explanation but, rather, how content we remain with this state of affairs. Judging by what the teachers and administrators of HPHS had to say, contentment is rather high. No one seemed upset or very much worried about how HPHS students got themselves sorted into the various "levels" and "tracks" they would travel through the maze of curricular options. And I confess that I, too, was not troubled by conditions as they exist, once they had been explained to me.

Later, however, I began to wonder how long that contentment would last. We used to be very content that girls seldom chose to study mathematics and science, but we are not any more. We used to think it perfectly natural to exclude even mildly disabled students from regular classrooms, but we are beginning to change our minds about that too. What is to prevent us, then, from someday insisting that students not be allowed to opt out of a tough academic program simply because there is no pressure from their families for them to do otherwise? What is to stop us, also, from someday refusing to accept the fact that some elementary schools are better than others and that the graduates of the poorer institutions must forever lag behind the graduates of the better ones? The answer to such questions, I suspect, is: Nothing but time.

The temporality of such matters—our current definition of general education, the popularity of notions like "curricular innovation," and our present acceptance of educational groupings tinged with racial or ethnic exclusivity—raises my final question in this essay: Can the changes that occur in schools like HPHS be counted as signs of progress. Do such institutions really get better and better over the years, as the principal seems to think HPHS has done? Or do they simply bob up and down with the waves of educational fashion?

The changes at HPHS over the past couple of decades incline me to accept, with qualifications, the principal's judgment. A case *can* be made that HPHS is better now, that progress has been made. But we must first identify and agree on those values whose gradual realization in concrete and specific terms

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provides the standard for gauging forward motion. And that job of settling on the *direction* of progress is by no means easy, as we all know. Unfortunately, the signs—some pointing one way, some another—do not always agree.

Yet there is a general drift discernible in the changes at HPHS over the years, and it might be said that the direction of that drift constitutes forward motion. Broadly speaking, the movement seems guided by a set of values commonly associated with what is usually called "liberal" or "progressive" social thought; consequently, I shall label it "liberal-progressive." The direction of this glacial drift is toward the twin goals of social justice and equity, though among the values that serve as its guiding stars are several that place a high premium on individual freedom and each person's right to choose what he wants to do and to decide for himself how best to live his own life. There is an internal tension within this set of values, a dialectical push and pull, that political theorists and philosophers have been fond of pointing out for centuries. It is in the working out of that tension, the opposition between the individual and the social, the one and the many, that liberal-progressive ideology is confronted with its greatest challenge. Whether such issues can ever be resolved, either in theory or in practice, remains a subject of great controversy. At HPHS such conflicts at present seem to be muted, but they are by no means totally absent, as we will see shortly.

The forces that have moved HPHS in this liberal-progressive direction over the years were seldom spontaneously generated within the school itself. Some, like the current practice of "mainstreaming" (placing students with various kinds of disabilities into regular classes), have come about chiefly as the result of federal intervention into educational affairs. Others, like the elimination of a dress code, are the result of legal suits. Still others, like the recent introduction of bilingual instruction, are little more than necessary accommodations to the changing character of the student body. It would be a mistake to credit the faculty and administration of HPHS with thinking up and initiating all of these changes. Indeed, perhaps few, if any, of them would have occurred absent outside pressures.

In all fairness to the faculty and administration of HPHS, however, most teachers and administrators welcomed these changes and worked actively to ensure their implementation. Others later became enthusiastic supporters of practices and policies they had initially resisted. The administration and faculty were neither generators of most or even many of these changes, nor heel-dragging opponents of change. The willingness of HPHS teachers and administrators to move in a liberal-progressive direction in educational matters places them closer to the "let's-try-it" side of the continuum than to the "let's-not."

Additional changes that embody a liberal-progressive ideology, at least in intent, relate chiefly to increased freedoms allowed individual students—freedom to leave campus during unscheduled periods (with parental permission), freedom to arrange individual schedules and programs (within broadly defined limits), and so on. There has also been a corresponding decrease in policies and institutional arrangements that had as their effect a rigid and often deprecatory categorization of students (e.g., forcing them to choose, once and for all, between an academic and a vocational program at the outset of their high-school career) or that deprived certain groups of students from certain

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kinds of educational experiences on grounds now believed to have been unfair (e.g., totally separate physical educational programs for boys and girls, with the former enjoying superior facilities and a richer program).

The combined effect of these two broad patterns of change is the gradual emergence of an educational environment in which the importance of *individual* differences is magnified while that of *group* differences—such as those between the sexes or between students headed for quite different futures in social, intellectual, or economic terms, or even between adults and adolescents, insofar as the right to control their own lives is concerned—is gradually played down, if not ignored completely. Another way of describing the results of this gradual removal of constraints (though by no means their elimination) is to say that over the years an ethic of elitism and social separatism has gradually given way (though by no means capitulated) to an ethic of egalitarianism and social community. What has taken place at HPHS in recent years mirrors the changes in the society at large. Is it progress? Many people think so, and with some strong reservations, I agree.

Those of us who think of these changes as "progress" must address two important questions before we can feel even moderately comfortable about such a judgment. The first relates to the costs that might balance and perhaps outweigh the benefits from the changes in question; the second, to the permanence of the change. The argument on behalf of progress would be severely damaged, if not destroyed, if the costs were greater than the benefits or if the forward movement could easily be halted and reversed.

I came away from my brief stay at HPHS with these questions unanswered but with a renewed conviction that progressive changes are neither uniformly beneficial nor totally irreversible. The increased freedom granted to HPHS students over the years—such as allowing them to leave campus during "free" periods—accords with "student rights" changes nationwide and with the modern spirit of extending rights and privileges to groups formerly denied them. Its ethical basis seems unassailable. But a black graduate of HPHS, who now works as an attendant at a nearby filling station, complained strongly to me about this policy.

> "The trouble with that school is that it's too free for the students' own good. When I first transferred from Waukegan High I was a C student, but I soon began to goof off, spending free periods in town and stuff like that, and it wasn't long before I was really scraping the bottom. I just barely graduated. Now, at Waukegan, they didn't have any of this "open campus" business. They had one door open to get in and another to get out and a guard at each. And that was it. Once you got to school, you stayed. And I think that's the way it should be for high-school kids."

His complaint is perhaps an isolated exception to the general approval accorded the open-campus policy. But it does make the point that not everyone may benefit from a change that benefits most people. The advantages enjoyed by the majority of students may in the long run far outweigh the costs in educational losses suffered by a few. But numbers alone may not suffice to justify such a decision. What if the losses pile up for one *group* of students and

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not another, as the example hints they might? How then do we decide whether the goal of social justice is being served? Under such circumstances, what principle should serve as the guide to policy formulation and action?

Again, consider the recent federal incursion into educational affairs in legislating for the mainstreaming of students with disabilities and for the equal treatment of boys and girls in curricular areas such as physical education. From the standpoint of humanitarian and egalitarian motives these must be considered progressive advances, well worth the cost, no matter what. But after listening to the principal of Highland Park and other schools enumerate the costs of such moves—the disturbing increase of governmental red tape, the loss of institutional flexibility, the mechanical nature of compliance procedures, and so forth—the argument on behalf of progress is by no means as unequivocal as it may seem from Washington.

Thus these policies and programs are somewhat of a mixed blessing, and at that, a hard one to tally. This rather pessimistic observation should remind all those who set educational policy—whether at the local, state, or national level—that it is at the *local* level that the unanticipated consequence of almost every effort to improve the schools will be felt; more important, that such consequences are not apparent without a close look at the actual workings of particular schools.

As for the possible reversal of these policies, no one can say absolutely, for none of us can see into the future. Yet if we take a historical view, and think about what has been happening within the society as a whole of late, certain predictions seem more probable than others. It is fairly certain, for example, that male students at HPHS will never again be threatened with suspension for wearing long hair or for growing beards. The courts have settled such matters once and for all. And schools like HPHS will not, in the very near future at least, return to an earlier practice of educational discrimination against girls by giving them a watered-down PE program or by encouraging them—perhaps even actively—to choose less intellectually demanding courses than those chosen by boys. In other words, changes that extend civil rights in general to students as a group or to subgroups that have suffered special deprivations in the past will not be quickly or easily reversed, if only because many now have legal backing. It is conceivable, of course, that laws could change, and public opinion with them, but our collective conscience has been moving throughout the last half century in a direction that makes unlikely any dramatic reversal of the overall trend toward social egalitarianism.

The future of curricular changes and such matters as graduation requirements and the like is less certain. Courses like Film Making and Ecology and other "innovative" offerings quite possibly may disappear from the curriculum of HPHS, not only because they deal with topics that are timely or "fashionable," and therefore subject to change, but also because they tend to be seen as "frills." It is not difficult to imagine a considerably shrunken curriculum at HPHS as economic difficulties intensify.

It is also possible that such courses may from time to time fall victim to recurring waves of educational conservatism, one of which seems to be on the rise. HPHS's present move to "beef up" its minimal distribution requirements by adding social studies, fine arts, and applied arts is an indication of this conservative trend. How long it will continue and how far it will spread at a

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school like HPHS are questions without answers. Commenting on such matters, the principal remarked that both faculty and students seemed to "want things more consistent these days." What he meant by that, as I understood him, was the administration's desire to have a more consistent posture in enforcing rules and regulations, the application of evaluative standards, and the like. He was quick to point out, however, that the present mood could change. All that would be required, he observed, would be "a new upsurge of repressiveness" in the society at large, which would in short order bring on "a new generation of Abbie Hoffmans" capable of changing the climate of opinion, especially among youth of high-school age.

There seems to be no predicting what the curricular offerings and academic requirements of schools like HPHS will be up the road. But the entire elective system certainly will not be swept away by either economic constraints or the new mood of conservatism. The faculty and administration of HPHS will be able to boast of the school's curricular innovativeness for some time to come. And the school will undoubtedly continue to offer a broad assortment of both "vocational" and "academic" courses, though the relative emphasis might shift markedly in response to worsening economic conditions and alterations in the student body. Such predictions are admittedly rather tame, but the history of recent efforts at curricular reform and attempts to create "alternative" organizational structures (i.e., the vaunted "schools-without-walls" and "schools-within-schools" of the early seventies) makes greater boldness unwise.

* * *

Two thousand four hundred seventeen teenagers are quite a sight to see as they move from class to class during the five-minute break between periods. Almost every imaginable type is there—tall and short, thin and fat, goodlooking and plain, black, white, Hispanic. Watching them saunter by in pairs and trios, jabbering away a mile a minute and looking for all the world like a Norman Rockwell painting come to life, it is hard to avoid recalling the patriotic thoughts that used to be (and perhaps still are) taught in school about America being a great melting pot, a place where rich and poor, newcomers and native-born, live and work side by side, sharing a common culture in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect. Here, happening before one's eyes, is the Democratic Dream, Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* performed by a cast of thousands, clad in down jackets, jeans, and running shoes, complete with perky little ingenues in Harris tweed sportcoats, Brooks Brothers blouses, Pendleton skirts, Coach bags slung from shoulderstraps, loafers by Gucci, and the whole outfit topped off by the latest in dental braces.

Is that what's really going on here? Is the Big Lesson at HPHS and schools like it one in democratic living, in what it means to be an American? It would be nice to think so. But such a thought is far too sentimental and naive to jibe with the facts. Social divisiveness of all sorts—racial, ethnic, religious, intellectual, socioeconomic, even separation by grade level and age—is rife at HPHS, and it does not take a trained sociologist to read the signs, only a little closer-than-average inspection of the way students group themselves as they move about in the halls, the cafeteria, or elsewhere. But a close look at social pairings within

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the school also reveals a considerable amount of racial and ethnic heterogeneity as well. Any honest portrayal of the school's social climate must as readily include these abundant "crossovers" as it does signs of insularity and isolation.

Are these exchanges and budding friendships among students of very different backgrounds sufficient to keep the Democratic Dream alive? At a more modest level, do they at least partially justify the creation of an educational environment in which they *might* happen, a school, that is, like HPHS, catering to a very large and socially diverse student body? Or is it only mushy-headed sentimentality, a leftover from nineteenth century thought, that prompts us to even entertain such a possibility? Two of the teachers I interviewed made comments that bear on this subject, and they are worth relating, if only as spurs to continued discussion and debate. The first comes from the chairman of Applied Arts, the department that has jurisdiction over the vocationally oriented portion of the curriculum. When asked how HPHS had changed over the years (a question she was especially suited to answer, having been a teacher at the school since the mid-fifties), she replied that one of the chief differences is that students taking vocational courses today are no longer branded as second-class citizens. The key, she explained, lay in the elimination of separate programs, one for vocational, the other for academic studies. Many students continue to take a preponderance of vocationally oriented courses, she pointed out, but they are no longer pejoratively labeled "Voc Ed" students.

The second comment came in a casual conversation with a young science teacher, who had herself graduated from HPHS five or six years ago and who had returned this fall as one of the newest additions to the faculty. The thing she noticed most about the school, she said, was that the "gulf" between Italian and Jewish students did not seem to be as great as it had been when she was a student. "They just seem to get along better." We must not put too much stock in such subjective impressions of course, yet they are encouraging, to say the least.

Perhaps the comprehensive high school will never do for our country what people like Charles W. Eliot, James B. Conant, and other of its ardent supporters once hoped. But scenes like those that take place every forty-five minutes or so in the corridors of HPHS, and testimony like that just cited, make it hard to believe that the early advocates of this form of schooling were totally amiss in their expectations. The process of overcoming long-standing prejudices and of advancing mutual understanding among various social groups may be painfully slow and may even suffer temporary setbacks, but can we doubt that comprehensive schools are advantageously placed to play a role in the attainment of such goals? They may not be as successful in this regard as we would like them to be, but the thought of not having them at all and the prospect of giving them up as an experiment that failed are not very pleasant ideas to contemplate.

If there is any educational secret hidden in the workings of HPHS, any true recipe for success that others might follow, I fear it escaped me, sad to say, though I am now more convinced than ever that there is none there to be found. Good schools, unlike the manufacturers of perfumes and other exotic concoctions, have few, if any, secrets to divulge. What their teachers and administrators know about how to educate, most other educators know as well. The

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determination to *act* on that knowledge is another matter entirely, of course, and is surely one of the major qualities distinguishing truly outstanding schools from those that are less so.

Yet even good schools, my visit made clear, operate within a framework of unexamined assumptions and presuppositions, reflecting the spirit of the times and comprising the dominant view of what is educationally desirable and feasible. This framework changes slowly—partly as a result of conscious effort and partly not—and as a consequence, schooling itself becomes either better or worse in the process. Thus, the real challenge is to think about how even good schools, like HPHS, might become better than they are through a careful examination of the substratum of assumptions and presuppositions that undergirds their work. The task requires treating as problematic what is now taken for granted. It forces us to ask not, What makes this school better than most? but, What's preventing it from becoming even better than it is? The constraints holding back good schools—assumptions about what constitutes an adequate education and who is capable of handling such a program of study, for example—are surely equally constraining on those of lesser quality. To make a good school better is to lead the way for the rest.

REFERENCES

The preparation of this essay was supported in part by a grant from the Spencer Foundation.

[1]The absence of German and the presence of Hebrew among foreign language offerings is a result of the high percentage of Jewish students at HPHS. German is available to the school's students at Deerfield High. However, the chairman of the Department of Foreign Languages reports that the number of HPHS students studying German "can be counted on the fingers of one hand."

[2]James V. Conant, *The American High School Today*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959), p. 47.

[3]I suspect that the decision to extend the requirements at HPHS may relate to declining enrollments in classes in the three departments being added to the "minimal distribution" list. I encountered a similar situation while serving as director of the University of Chicago's Laboratory Schools. Pressure to increase requirements almost invariably stemmed from departments whose teaching staff were threatened by declining numbers of students in their classes.

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SARA LAWRENCE LIGHTFOOT

Portraits of Exemplary Secondary Schools: St. Paul's School

IT IS A MAGNIFICENT SPRING DAY. The sky is clear blue, the air crisp, and the sun golden in the sky. The landscape is lush green, and the azaleas are exploding with blossoms of magenta, lavender, and deep orange. In short, it is the perfect day to visit St. Paul's School, which seems to stretch on for miles before me—aristocratic, manicured, perfect. I arrive midafternoon, the time for athletics, and see playing fields full of hockey and baseball players—lithe, graceful, practiced bodies moving across the grass.

Everyone is helpful and welcoming. A man in a blue truck—probably one of the custodial crew—finds me lost on the road and tells me to follow him to my destination, the School House. Everyone waves greetings. A young man on a small tractor-mower offers a wide, enthusiastic grin, and a tall, distinguished, slightly graying man gives a stiff and formal wave. I park behind the School House, next to a car with windows open and a young child inside. Having just arrived from the city, I wonder immediately how anyone could feel safe about leaving a precious child in the car. Fearing that I will frighten her, I smile and speak softly to the little girl. But she babbles back, unafraid. The child's mother returns after a couple of minutes. A plainly attractive woman of about thirty-five, she is one of five females on the faculty. She greets me warmly, introduces me to her daughter, and drives off quickly to play tennis. I am struck by how safe, secure, and beautiful it feels at St. Paul's. It is a place where windows and doors are left open, people exchange friendly greetings, and babies wait in cars unattended.

The land belonging to St. Paul's seems to stretch on forever. There are seventeen hundred acres of woods and open land surrounding over three hundred acres of lakes and ponds, and over eighty buildings. A shimmering lake carves out a graceful shape in the central campus landscape. The light of early evening makes the lake a mirror; the lily pads that dot the water gently sway back and forth; and all feels serene and still. The traditional, graceful architecture of New England characterizes the campus buildings—sturdy brick structures, with ivy growing up the walls, and white, flatfaced houses with black and green shutters.

Among these quietly majestic old buildings are three others, sleek and modern, that house the programs in dance, theater, and the plastic arts. A parent of a St. Paul's student, interested in supporting the development of the

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arts program, gave $3 million for these new buildings. Elegantly designed and highly functional, they were conceived to be adaptive to the artistic mediums they house. The theater in the drama building is layered, movable, and sparse, allowing for myriad rearrangements of space. The stage can be dramatically transformed from one performance to the next.

Mr. Sloan, the director of dance, worked closely with the architects and builders in the design of the dance building, and it shows the wisdom and inspiration of the artist's experience. The major dance space in the building is used for both classes and performances. Bleachers and balconies surround two sides of the dance floor, with mirrors and dance bars lining the other walls. Sunlight sweeps in the high windows and casts tree shadows on the dance floor. The internal lighting is soft and effective. The extraordinary detail can only be fully appreciated by dancers. Mr. Sloan takes me into his office and proudly shows me the miniature model of the dance floor. It is a five-layered construction that took several months to build, and it moves and ripples when it is jumped on. "It is the best in the business," says Mr. Sloan. "The American Ballet Theater has the same floor."

The arts buildings symbolize one of the major missions of St. Paul's School. In his ten-year leadership of the school, William Oates, the rector, says that the building of the arts program is one of the developments he feels most proud of. Along with the superb physical facilities, new faculty positions have been added in the arts; students can receive academic credit for course work; and there are numerous opportunities for students to give concerts, performances, and exhibitions. In his 1979 *Annual Report*, Oates stressed the connections between art and culture, art and intellect, and art and personal growth.

> Work in the arts provides an opportunity for participants to learn about themselves. And this opportunity is particularly valuable for students at St. Paul's School because it allows, and in some ways demands, consideration of fundamental issues through observation, and testing, and experimentation. From fourteen years old through eighteen this chance is eagerly sought and required. This is the period of questioning and exploring, of self-doubt and braggadocio, the period of developing self-confidence and of maturing personality. In the arts are found cultural contradictions and conflicts, insight, informed speculation, tradition and discipline, and a general pattern for testing achievement and apparent success. The arts afford the use of uncommitted space for thoughtful and considered growth through consolidation of experimentation. And increasing knowledge of the self promotes and supports its realization.

In stark contrast to the angular lines of the art buildings, the chapel of St. Paul and St. Peter stands as a symbol of classic beauty. The one-hundred-year-old brick structure was the first building on the campus, and its stained glass windows, ornate wood carving, and regal dimensions mark the history and roots of this school. It is in these modern and traditional edifices that St. Paul's reveals its connections to past and present, its commitment to sacred traditions and contemporary change.

A Binding Together

Chapel is the most precious moment in the day. It binds the community together. The 500 students from the third through sixth forms and eighty

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faculty come together at 8:00 A.M. four mornings a week. There is time for peace and reflection, for beautiful music and poetic words. Streams of sunlight filter through the magnificent stained glass windows, shining down on all inside. They seem like the enlightened people, the chosen ones. And there is the connection between mind and soul, body and spirit, the sacred and the secular. The baroque organ, its sounds pure and clear, is "one of the best in New England." It fills the space with rich, reverberating sounds. The organ playing is impeccable.

Chapel services are an expression of unity, fellowship, and a commitment to Christian traditions at St. Paul's. As a church school, it has had a longtime association with the Episcopal church, and the rituals and structure of the Episcopal ceremony still form the basis of morning chapel services. But the denominational ties have slackened. The school catalogue stresses the relationship between spiritual commitment and community life:

> Chapel services, studies in religion, and our common life in Christian fellowship are expressions of the unity and fundamental faith of St. Paul's School. . . . The school supports the beliefs of each faith, encouraging students to recognize the strength and loyalty of the commitments of their families. The school recognizes that all its members should discover the meaning of the Christian tradition in their own lives through free inquiry, and the experience of community life in that tradition.

The beautiful old architectural lines of the chapel are in contrast to the ruffled and contemporary people sitting in assigned seats in the long carved pews. Dressed in typical adolescent garb—rustic chic—students' faces are still and attentive. Some slump over in weariness, some eyes are half-closed, but most seem to be captured by the ritual. They give their full attention and generous applause when their fellow students make music. The day I visit, the service is an all-musical program of Bach. The first piece is played well by a trio of flute, harpsichord, and violin. It is a slow movement that requires sustained and disciplined tones. Occasionally, the violin is clumsy in technique and flat in tone, but that is the only evidence that this is an amateur performance. The second piece, the first movement of Bach's Third *Brandenberg* Concerto, begins energetically, but quickly degenerates. The students, led by a faculty conductor, barely struggle through the difficult string variations, but no one winces at the grating sounds. There is strong applause for the ambitious attempt. I am struck by the extraordinary difficulty of the music and the willingness of the students to do less than well in public. I am also impressed by the sustained elegance with which this musical disaster is carried off. This seems the ultimate in certainty and style. There is no embarrassment—only a full acceptance of the efforts made and the expectation of applause.

The faculty sit in the upper pews, also in assigned seats. Chapel is a compulsory community event for faculty as well as for students. Along with the formal evening meals, chapel is considered one of the important rituals that symbolize community and fellowship, emphasize discipline and ceremony, and reflect a sense of continuity between past and present. Looking down the row of faculty, the dominance of whiteness and maleness becomes immediately apparent. Most are wearing ties and tweed jackets, and the unusual ones stick out—the blond, pregnant history teacher; the bearded, tall Jewish head of the

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English Department; the casually garbed dance teacher with a head full of irreverent ringlets. It is not that there is no diversity within the faculty, but that their sameness is exaggerated in this setting as they sit lined up in the back pews of the chapel.

It is also in chapel that one experiences the impressive orchestration of the school. All seems to flow so smoothly and evenly, almost effortlessly. Behind this smooth scene is the hard, disciplined work of many. "Chapel Notes" for the week tell what music will be played, what hymns sung, and what lessons will be read. A faculty member is assigned to regulate the acoustic system just in front of her chapel pew to ensure the right volume for each microphone. Notes are delivered to the rector well in advance of the "Morning Reports." The day I am at chapel, the rector arrives and opens an elegant note from the senior class. The script is like calligraphy, the image above the writing shows a bird in flight, and the message inside combines poetry and allusions to Scripture and prayer. The senior class has decided that this sunny day will be their senior-cut day, and they are off to the beach in rented buses. Their absence is no surprise to anyone. Their actions are certainly not devious or even assertive. This is part of the anticipated ritual. The person sitting next to me whispers, "Of course, the rector was informed about this well in advance." It is beautifully arranged—the anticipated "surprise" event, the ceremonial note, the announcement to those assembled, and the restrained approval of everyone.

The supreme orchestration of events and people at St. Paul's reflects, I think, the abundance and privilege of the school. To be able to anticipate and coordinate life in this way, one must be able to foresee a future that is relatively certain. Years of experience rooted in tradition seem to guide the present. Some things seem to fall into place without conscious effort. It has always been that way. History has cast a form on things. In his concluding remarks on graduation day, the rector underscores the mark of tradition and history: "This ceremony has become traditional, and, therefore, mandatory." In schools where things inevitably fall apart, where patterns of the past are not clearly defined, and where futures are neither certain nor promised, one does not sense this feeling of an orchestrated and smooth existence.

"Morning Reports" follow chapel. All gather outside on the chapel steps as the rector announces the day's happenings. He begins by formally welcoming me into their midst: "We have the pleasure of a visit from Professor Sara Lawrence Lightfoot, and I would like to introduce her to those who have not yet met her." Applause and smiles follow, with some picture taking. Then an announcement that startles me: "Robert Brown has been off bounds for smoking marijuana and will return on Friday"—said with the same tone and demeanor as his welcoming words. This is the first time since my arrival that I have heard words of public discipline or sensed the exclusion of a community member. It is also the first time in a very long time that I have heard "pot" referred to as marijuana. It seems a throwback to the old days, and sounds more forbidding and dangerous in its three-syllable incarnation.

Four times a week faculty and students gather at the close of day for a formal family-style meal in the dining room. This is the second major community ritual that echoes the traditions and ceremony of St. Paul's and encourages fellowship among students and faculty. On Wednesday evenings and weekends, eating is done cafeteria-style, and dress codes are relaxed.

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Ms. Susan Thompson, a vivacious middle-aged woman, has been on St. Paul's faculty since the school became coeducational a decade ago. She leaves her office at the School House in the early evening with just enough time to freshen up and change into a slightly fancier dress. The door of her apartment on the second floor of a girls' dormitory stands wide open. For me, it is another sign of the feelings of trust and safety at St. Paul's, and the first sign of the obscuring of public and private boundaries between faculty and students. Anyone at any time can walk in and talk, make requests, and seek counsel. There are two other faculty members who live in the dormitory—a young single woman lives on the third floor, and a married woman with a husband and child, who have the most sumptuous accommodations, on the first floor. Each is responsible for supervising the dormitory on alternate evenings. Ms. Thompson speaks of all three faculty as "strong" dormitory counselors, and feels pleased at the disciplined, yet comfortable, rapport that has developed among those who live there. Among students, this dormitory has the reputation of being overly strict and inhibiting. In the late spring, when students make room selections for the following year, most do not list this dormitory as their first choice because they want to escape the rigorous supervision. More than a few girls, however, seem to seek out the peace and security of this setting.

Ms. Thompson's apartment has three rooms: a large living room, a study-bedroom, and tiny kitchen. It is simply, barely decorated with modest furniture. One bright, colorful canvas, a picture of brown people in a bustling marketplace, dominates the living room, and seems strangely out of place in this severe, colorless environment. Home does not seem to be important to Ms. Thompson. She describes herself as a "workaholic," not much interested in homemaking. Life is not centered here but in the school as community. In a few minutes we are off to dinner. The campus is alive with students converging from all directions, walking briskly up the hill to the dining hall.

Students and faculty congregate in small groups in the outside hall of the great dining room, waiting for doors to open for dinner. Boys must wear jackets, and girls, "comparable" clothing. After daytime's cutoff jeans, bare feet, and T-shirts, the students look transformed in their formal attire. Ironically, the third-form boys appear even younger in their jackets and ties, while the sixth-form girls look like mature, fully formed women in their spring dresses. The great dining room with high ceilings and stained glass windows is only used for formal evening meals. On the wood paneling that lines the walls from floor to ceiling, names of the students in each of the school's graduating classes are carefully, aesthetically carved. A boy at my table can turn around and see his uncle's name carved in the wall behind him. It is misspelled.

Each faculty member sits with eight students at a long rectangular table with straight high-backed chairs. Seats are assigned and rotated every three weeks, and students are chosen to create a mix of grade levels and interests. Grace is said by a man with a booming voice, as everyone stands behind their chairs with bowed heads. Dinner conversation is somewhat formal and subdued. My presence may have been inhibiting, but I hear many students and some faculty

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complain of the forced quality of these occasions. The adults ask most of the questions and the students respond politely. A willowy blond girl in the fifth form has come from upstate New York to study in the excellent dance program. A lively, bright-eyed black boy from Chicago is practicing for the Latin play to be given on the weekend of graduation. He tells us about an invention he is trying to patent, and seems to be knowledgeable about the legal steps required to protect his idea. A sixth-form girl from New England is the most socially sophisticated and smooth. She speaks of her plans to go to the University of Colorado next year.

Dinner is quickly eaten, despite the ceremonial conversation. When they are finished, all ask dutifully in turn, "Miss Thompson, may I be excused?" and she grants them permission. This granting of permission seems almost archaic. As they seek to be excused, they appear suddenly childlike. Many times during my visit to St. Paul's I am struck by the swiftly changing adolescent images. At any moment, the smooth exterior of the mature, worldly, adultlike image fades and exposes the awkward vulnerability of a child.

The Edges of Reality and Unreality

Such incredible beauty, seclusion, and abundance make St. Paul's seem far away from the reality most people know. It is hard to conceive of anyone growing used to this magnificence. It is easy to imagine that people might quickly forget the ugly facts of life beyond this serene place. Yet occasionally, rumblings are heard underneath the smooth facade.

> Last year, just two days before graduation, several sixth-form boys decided to steal away into the woods and drink beer. Knowing well that alcohol consumption is against the school rules, these boys—some of them school leaders—decided to tempt fate in the final hour. Slightly high from their beer party and elated with the anticipation of their graduation celebrations, they sang loud songs and walked back along the public highway toward school. When they saw a car coming their way, the rowdy group stuck out their thumbs to hitch a ride. As luck would have it, these normally good boys were picked up by a faculty member, who smelled liquor on their breath and felt compelled to report them. Disciplinary measures were harsh. The boys were not permitted to attend graduation, even though many of their families were already en route to the ceremony, and they were sent home immediately.

Although this sounds like a typical adolescent prank with grave repercussions, the underside of this near-perfect place reveals serious problems of alcoholism, plagiarism, cohabitation, and drug abuse. But these transgressions seem to occur relatively infrequently. Mostly, St. Paul's seems to proceed without severe crises. The tempestuous period of adolescence is subdued in this setting, or at least it appears that the tempests are channeled into productive energy.

Although "real life" often feels distant from life at St. Paul's, the truths told here sometimes seem unflinchingly real. Many times I was surprised by how

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students and faculty confronted issues that usually remain unspoken or camouflaged, particularly in the context of school life.

A Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist from *The Boston Globe* is a visiting speaker in a sixth-form class on advertising and the media. The speaker is intense, witty, probing. This semester he is a visiting professor at Yale, and his style with the St. Paul's students has the same dry humor and sophistication that he uses with university students and colleagues. There is no talking down, no attempts to simplify. He begins his monologue on political advertising with a high-level, penetrating discussion about the packaging of political candidates. His sentences are laced with difficult concepts and words. He speaks of metaphors, symbolism, conceptions of human nature, and the creation of images in political advertising. Uncertain about whether he is reaching his audience, from time to time he encourages questions. The students need little encouragement.

STUDENT: Newspapers are historically known for having commitments to certain political candidates. . . . Is it true with television networks? Do they show favoritism?

SPEAKER: CBS is a little to the left. ABC is to the right. NBC is asleep. . . . Mostly, the networks research the prevailing attitudes of the audience, and they match those fundamental biases.

Inspired by this line of thought, the speaker wants to make a more general point about ideological influences in the media. "In the media, being 'objective' does not mean being without bias or prejudice. It is a bias toward the mainstream. It means being white, middle class, Christian, and capitalist." Even though these characteristics would seem to describe most of the students sitting in the classroom, the listeners seem unthreatened by the harsh criticism. They listen intently, but their faces show no change of expression, no signs of emotion. The speaker's provocative words are heard, but not visibly challenged. The teacher, who has remained silent since introducing the speaker, fears the bold cynicism of the message, and tries to offer balance to the discussion by referring to the democratic nature of the political process, the opportunity for people's voices to be heard through the ballot box. The teacher's comments are measured and hesitant, compared to the biting criticisms of the speaker, who continues to assert his pessimistic perspective. "Everyone gets to vote, so that seems to validate the democratic process. Consent implies democracy, which implies consent. . . . If the citizenry cannot make informed choices, should they be making uninformed ideological choices?" The dialogue between the teacher and speaker grows increasingly intense and obscure. A student, lost in the barrage of words, interrupts with what he thinks is a straightforward question about Anderson's chances for success in the presidential race. But the speaker responds with complicated notions, refusing to submit to facile generalizations or easy answers. "Consider the effects of not advertising. If you are not advertising, journalists will not take you seriously—the case of Anderson—

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because they think if Anderson doesn't advertise, he will not be able to bring out votes. So journalists think he is not serious and generally disregard him."

I am struck by the pursuit of truth, the recognition of competing truths, and the spirit of inquiry and debate. The adults are not afraid to disagree publicly, nor do they alter the nature of their discourse to present a simpler, prettier picture of the world to their students. The speaker underscores the ugly undersides of the political process and attacks any remaining illusions of a fair race. The reality presented by the speaker seems very far away from the serenity and perfections of St. Paul's. Ironically, the accounts of real-life events are far more truthful and probing than the stories normally told to students in other high-school settings where ideals and illusions are more carefully guarded. The students at St. Paul's seem to greet the uncovering of truths with a certain detachment. When the class is abruptly over, the students rise quickly and pour out of the room. The teacher offers a few last words: "Wrestle with the issue of democracy . . . "—but the students have moved on, seemingly undisturbed by the message they have heard.

The Inquiring Spirit

The rector's address at the Anniversary Chapel Service on graduation day points to the "developmentalist perspective" that pervades the culture of St. Paul's. It is a stark, clear essay on facing the ambiguities and uncertainties of life beyond the relatively safe and nurturing environment of St. Paul's. "Can we learn to reconcile ourselves to imperfect choices? . . . We send our sixth-form friends on to a complex world, but we do so with confidence." In negotiating the myriad commitments and pursuits of St. Paul's, the rector is confident that the graduating class has "tested and explored options," met difficult and competing challenges, struggled against temptation, and emerged from the four-year odyssey ready to face the world. The challenges confronting St. Paul's students, however, are cradled in an environment nurtured by certainty, abundance, and respect. These qualities are deep-rooted in history. "St. Paul's is the center of love and care for many generations," says the rector, after warning the graduates of the possibility of growing rigid and threatened as one faces life's imperfections. The certainty of love and care allow one to take risks and ask probing questions. "The inquiring spirit turns the words of the psalm into a question."

There is a connection, it seems, between feeling safe and protected and daring to move beyond safety. There is an invincible quality about these young people that probably reflects their privileged station, but that also grows out of the maturity and confidence that come with positive and productive intellectual, social, and psychological experiences. Never once at St. Paul's did I hear a teacher diminish or undermine a student in any way. Never once did I see students act disrespectfully of one another. With no fear of abuse, there is plenty of room for open inquiry, for testing limits, and for trying very hard.

In an advanced dance class, the teacher is a benign, but rigorous, taskmaster. A dancer with the American Ballet Theater for almost a decade,

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Mr. Sloan has "retired" to teaching. He approaches it with the same seriousness and dedication that must have sustained his successful dance career. Nine students dressed in traditional ballet garb go through their practiced motions at the bar. Without much talk, the dance teacher demonstrates the next step and then walks around the floor offering individual support and criticism. Suddenly he claps and says, "No." Music and motion stop. One dancer is singled out: "Maria, get your arms down. . . . In the same rhythm, open your arms and plié." Maria, a tall, angular Hispanic, tries the step again, without embarrassment, as everyone is turned silently toward her. An hour later, when the dancers are doing complicated, fast-moving combinations across the floor, the teacher singles out Michelle, a pretty, petite black girl, whose steps have been tentative and constricted. "That's a good start, but take a chance, a risk. . . . Go for it, Michelle," he bellows. It is a tough challenge as he makes her do it over and over again. She is awkward, unbalanced, and almost falls several times, but the dance master will not let her stop. As Michelle struggles to master this complicated step in front of her classmates, some watch attentively without laughter or judgment. Others practice on their own around the edges of the floor, waiting their turn. Everyone, including Mr. Sloan, exerts great energy and tries very hard. Imperfections are identified and worked on without embarrassment.

There is a rising crescendo in the mood and tone of the class as the steps get tougher, the music more rigorous, and the instructor and students more charged. The exhilaration and vigor of the final moments contrast with the serious and subdued attentiveness of the early bar work. As dancers execute the swift steps across the floor, the wide range of skill and talent is revealed. Kara is a precise and elegant dancer, whose hopes of becoming a professional seem realistic and promising. Even when she is tackling the most difficult step, she is smooth and graceful. But even she does not escape criticism. Mr. Sloan insists on the subtle, almost invisible points. There is always room for improvement. A very tall, lean young man, who looks awkward and primitive in comparison, tries just as hard, but never produces a step that even vaguely resembles the one demonstrated by the teacher. No one laughs or grimaces as he breaks down halfway across the floor. The challenge remains: "You'll do it like that for awhile, and you'll build up to doing it better. . . . It's a very difficult step."

Another example: Thirty sixth-form students sit in scattered chairs, vaguely forming a semicircle, facing Dr. Carter Woods in their first-period class on human personality. Sitting, Woods tilts his chair back, arms clasped behind his head, and begins to speak thoughtfully and tentatively. As a prelude he says, "We're all good friends in here. We know each other well." Then, without notes and looking up at the ceiling, the teacher begins to ruminate out loud. "Freud had a little help from his friends, but they started out on a really good tack. . . . They all came out of biology. . . . Free association was an amazing thing, . . . totally existential, totally client-centered, a total departure from tradition. Carl Rogers wasn't even imagined in those times." The contemplative monologue soon turns into a conversation, as students move in and out of the

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discussion. The words are often sophisticated, and the thinking convoluted, as Woods and his students explore together the murky waters of psychodynamic theory. The teacher encourages them to think out loud and search for meanings by using that approach himself. "I am not sure what it means to get in touch with one's senses. I thought I'd work that out with you. Let me struggle with it for a moment." Then, in even more searching tones, Woods says, "I find myself wanting to know how I can best instruct myself in finding out what Pearls means." Not everyone is with him on this exploration. Some are visibly confused, some attentively listening, others daydreaming, a few are not quite awake for the first period in the morning. Six or seven students are completely involved and challenged by the probing questions. Occasionally, a down-to-earth, concrete question is asked of Woods, as some students seem to want to establish boundaries and limits to the wandering conversation. Woods resists getting pinned down: "*I* don't know. I'm asking *you*." When Woods approaches the board to review material covered before, most students respond to the certainty by copying the categories and lists he writes. The pedagogical message is clear: To understand, you must inquire and struggle to find meaning. To explore the full range of ideas, you must take risks and tolerate ambiguities. But this must be done in a nonjudgmental and accepting environment. When one of the students begins to slightly ridicule the "simplistic thinking" of the early psychologists, Woods responds immediately to her cynicism and encourages her to appreciate the slow evolution of ideas. "Science changes very slowly. We have the advantage of history. It is hard to move away from former, earlier authority." When the class is about to end, Woods says exuberantly, "The struggle—I'm happy in it."

Although the styles and substance of these two classes are very different, the themes of "love and caring" are prominent in both. The encouragement of risk-taking and moving beyond the safety zones are also stressed by both teachers. And the success of the latter seems to be dependent on establishing the former.

It is likely that the nurturing and challenging experiences of students at St. Paul's help to build a community of trust and kinship, but the careful selection of applicants supports that goal as well. The admissions committee chooses one out of every thirteen students who apply, in a conscious effort to select young people who will thrive in St. Paul's setting. When I ask one of the two psychologists at the school what kind of students are most successful at St. Paul's, he lists a number of characteristics: those with ego strength and a commitment to relationships and community, those who are outgoing, intelligent, and academically able. The applicants who are unlikely to survive the selection process tend to be those who are inward and withdrawn, who seem to be able to do without other human beings—the "young savants" who feel awkward socially. There are a few admitted who may at first "appear to be unresponsive" to people, but "manage to respond in more indirect ways." St. Paul's feels it can tolerate these more reticent souls if there is promise that they will make a unique contribution to the life of the community. There is some sense that diversity of backgrounds, styles, and temperaments is an integral part

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of a rich community experience. Learning to relate to others different from oneself is an important preparation for facing a diverse society and a critical part of articulating self-definition.

The best way to describe "the ethos of the St. Paul's community is that it is Eriksonian in emphasis." That is, there is a stress put on trust, industry, and autonomy. The rector, who admits to being profoundly influenced by Erikson, speaks of an evolutionary change in the school under his decade of leadership: "The school has moved toward a more developmentalist approach." From an administrative point of view, the "new approach" was visibly initiated by hiring two school psychologists, who have become an integral and critical part of community life. One trained in counseling and consulting psychology, the other originally trained as a researcher in psychobiology, these two men have carved out unusual, nontraditional roles at St. Paul's. Along with teaching half-time, they participate in all community responsibilities, including attending chapel and dining room meals, coaching sports, and living in student dormitories. Beyond these regular daily duties they offer counsel, advice, and support to individual students and faculty. Carter Woods's office door is always open. "I had to work very hard to keep my door open. At first, everyone thought of the psychologist's work as secretive, mystical, something that happens behind closed doors." Now when students come to see him about personal dilemmas and stress, Woods makes little separation between the intellectual and psychic spheres of life, but attempts rather to see each student as "whole."

The developmentalist view offers a "different view of human nature"—a view that can anticipate universal patterns of behavior and attitude formation. The psychologists seek to convey the progression of these patterns to students and faculty alike, so that neither group will be surprised or upset by characteristic human dilemmas that tend to emerge at different stages of development. As one student said, with enormous relief, this new knowledge of human development "helps me forecast my life," offers new interpretations and some solace when things feel as if they are falling apart. For faculty, the developmentalist view changes their perception of students as "good and bad." Now, when they have lost all patience with the antics of the thirteen-year-olds, they can be gently reminded that these are anticipated and appropriate behaviors for third-form students, and that these characteristics are transitional and transforming. By fifth form these students will appear as changed human beings, and "we know some of the reasons why."

Not only do the psychologists offer individual counsel and guide the interpretations of behavior, they also give direct consultation to faculty who are struggling with problem students or having difficulties negotiating with one another. For a few years now, Derek James has sat in on the faculty meetings of the History Department, where there are a couple of "volatile members." After fights and disagreements, James helps them discover the origins of their struggle and supports them through a temporary resolution. Carter Woods offers the same sort of listening and counseling role for the Religion Department, often fractionated by polarized views of the appropriate curriculum for adolescents facing contemporary realities. And every Monday at lunchtime, the rector, vice-rectors, chaplains, and psychologists meet with the trainer, who runs the school infirmary, to share information on any students who seem to be having

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academic difficulties or physical and mental health problems. They go around the circle offering their pieces of information on individual students, encouraging other perspectives and interpretations, gauging the seriousness of the problem presented, and finally assigning one of the group to follow-up action. It is an attempt to gather information and to search for new approaches, an orchestration of efforts, and careful attention to detail. Says the rector, "We don't want anyone to fall through the cracks." The Monday lunch is also another indication of the effort made at St. Paul's to work with "the whole child." Here, "experts" on body, mind, and soul gather to piece together their perspectives and offer their images of health.

The academic courses taught by the psychologists provide an opportunity for students to learn important material on culture and human behavior, as well as confront and express their own feelings and attitudes on questions of personality development, sexuality, and human relationships. The psychology courses are filled with sixth-form students who, having already met the academic requirements for college entrance, can now take the less rigorous, more freewheeling courses that might be considered less than serious by college admissions officers. Envious third-form and fourth-form students—and some unconvinced faculty—continue to refer to the psychology curriculum as "breeze" courses. It is likely that the readings and written assignments are not as demanding in these courses as in others, but the intensity and seriousness of the issues raised must surprise and baffle some unsuspecting sixth-form students.

> Dr. James, a thin, bearded man with a gentle and inquisitive style, teaches the seminar on human sexuality. Twenty students sit around a large rectangular oak table, many of them draped casually over chairs, some sitting on the edge of their seats with intense animation. Several students wander in late, and the atmosphere is casual. No one opens a book or takes notes. James begins by presenting statistics on a study reported in *The New York Times* that surveyed attitudes toward homosexuality. "What would you do if your best friend said that he/she was a homosexual?" James merely recites the study's findings. He does not elicit responses from his students because he judges it to be "an invasion of their privacy" and in opposition to the "cultural norms" well established in this classroom. Almost without direction or provocation from the teacher, the discussion heats up. Sometimes James makes brief comments or tentative suggestions, but mostly students direct their comments to one another, offer opposing opinions, and disagree vehemently. The girls, sounding womanly and worldly-wise, dominate the conversation. One very straight, handsome young man seems to have accepted the role of "traditionalist," or worse, male chauvinist, and welcomes the abuse that is hurled toward him. The discussion of homosexuality is short-lived. It quickly turns into a discussion of differences in the ways men and women express feelings of rage, sadness, joy, and love. James willingly follows the shifts of direction and mood, and says, "The culture comes down so hard on males being tough and hard . . . they are not supposed to be tender. . . . If you're not hard and strong, you're not male." A rush of responses follows as the conversation grows increasingly personal. One girl chal-

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lenges, "But I've seen *both* my parents cry." The "traditionalist" evokes a response by claiming that only the weak cry: "My mother rarely cries and my father *never* cries." Another boy speaks up for the first time with some embarrassment. "My father comes home, walks down into the basement, and hurls Pyrex glasses (he's a chemist) against the wall . . . comes upstairs, takes a deep breath, and eats. . . . He takes his anger out on objects rather than people. . . . It's sort of bizarre." Family stories are revealed, as most students try to make distinctions between themselves and their parents. They recognize the profound influence of parental values and behaviors, but they also stress their conscious intentions to find their own styles of expression. Emotion and intellect, information and expression, are fused in the student conversation. The atmosphere remains nonjudgmental. Trust is high, and the discussion, once charged and forceful, flows into moments of humorous release. When the bell rings to mark the end of class, I am startled. For the past fifty minutes this has not felt like school, and I am shocked by the intrusion of school sounds. The students seem undisturbed by the abrupt transition. Immediately, they are out of the room and on to the next class without apparent confusion. To them, this is part of school.

Although explicitly recognizing the dimensions of the whole child and the inextricable interdependence of the psyche, the soul, and the intellect, St. Paul's views its mission and purpose as clearly educational. "St. Paul's does not try to be a therapeutic community," warns Carter Woods, who is constantly having to delineate the boundaries between educational and therapeutic efforts. These boundary lines are not always so easily drawn. "St. Paul's goes to every length, uses every resource, to provide educational resources for a student. . . . We spend thousands of dollars a year on an individual student trying to help him or her over an academic hurdle. . . . We would rather spend it on a student than on a building." But when problems seem to originate in families, beyond the boundaries of school, and when the student responds by being disruptive in a way that "infringes upon the good of the community" or the "space" of other individuals, the student is asked to leave. Woods recently accompanied a troubled boy on his flight home to the West Coast. After months of trying to "incorporate this boy into community life," St. Paul's felt it had run out of resources and energy. The boy's problems were too profound to be addressed by the faculty, and his acting out was beginning to affect negatively the lives of other students. At the other end of the flight Woods had to face the sensitive task of communicating the bad news to the parents, their harsh defensiveness, and then their sense of defeat and guilt at their son's return.

On many occasions, families are included in the school's attempts to help a student who is having major problems. The parents of a girl who had serious problems with alcohol were asked to come to St. Paul's to meet with the psychologists and members of the faculty. Attempts were made to explore the history of alcoholic problems within the family, and long-distance calls were made to a psychiatrist in the Midwest who had treated members of the family for mental distress. As parents, siblings, and outside professionals rallied together to pool information, offer support, and express their feelings, Woods

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orchestrated the combined effort, carefully negotiating the terrain of family and school responsibilities.

In seeking the counsel and support of parents, St. Paul's has begun to take a different view of family-school relationships. Traditionally, families were systematically and purposely excluded from participating in school affairs. Told when they delivered their child to the campus in September that they should return at the close of school in June, parents were expected to be invisible and silent, uninvolved in their child's acculturation to St. Paul's. It was taken for granted that parents and teachers would agree on the basic values and cultural perspectives to be imbued in their young charges. Trust and partnership were assumed because there seemed to be a harmony of values between home and school, an unspoken consensus. Besides, many of the fathers had themselves been students at St. Paul's and were confident and knowledgeable about what happened behind the closed gates. As the world beyond St. Paul's has become increasingly complex, as family structures grow more diverse and uncertain, and as St. Paul's adopts the developmentalist perspective, it has seemed increasingly important to welcome families as a vital resource and an important source of information. Woods speaks of families as a critical "connection to the culture," and recognizes their profound and primary role in the lives of students. Some families are not comfortable with this change in the school's view of them. The father of a troubled boy, who had been asked to come up to St. Paul's, felt awkward and inappropriate as they talked in Woods's living room. Expressing his initial wariness, he said, "I'm feeling uncomfortable here. When I was here as a student, families were made to feel unwelcome."

Unimpeachable Power

At St. Paul's, the rector wields great power. Everyone describes Bill Oates as powerful—a power that is defined both by the traditions and expectations of his role and his character. He is energetic, uncompromising, and focused in his goals. But he does not wield power carelessly. It is a restrained authority, always held in check and used sparingly. Although faculty emphasize his great powers, they also talk about his political intelligence, his keen understanding of decision-making patterns, and his thoughtful, balanced consultation of the people involved. For example, there are fifteen faculty and three students on the admissions committee, who work for months reading and making judgments on over a thousand folders. After reaching carefully negotiated decisions, they make recommendations to the rector, with whom the final decision rests—"but he is wise enough to recognize when an overturned decision would greatly violate a difficult and consuming selection process or offend an important constituency." But in every entering class there are inevitably the rector's choices—students whose families are important donors to the school or who have connections to external sources of power that the rector wants to tap.

Faculty rarely argue with the rector or even dare to disagree strongly. No one risks being late to meetings with him. People who normally seem strong and sturdy appear strangely submissive and accommodating in his presence. One teacher, who challenged the rector with an opposing view in a small planning meeting, told of his restrained, but scathing, response, her sense of bravery and

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risk-taking in even raising the issue in his presence, and the buzz around the faculty room when word leaked out that she had acted irreverently.

Even though his dominance is without question, his style is not dominating. Rather, he appears supremely civilized and benign, taking on the demeanor of the rectors who were his predecessors. The weight of the role, already well established and deeply forged by history, seems to shape perceptions of him just as much as his own actions. In fact, many students describe him as friendly and approachable. He knows every student's name, and can speak knowledgeably about their special and unique styles, personal struggles, and important triumphs. Every Saturday night he and his wife host an Open House with punch and famous chocolate chip cookies. Most students stop by at some point during the evening. Says one, "It's fun to go and shake his hand and chat with him. I have a friend who goes to Exeter and she says they never see their headmaster. He just disappears and never comes out." Some faculty say that, with reference to student life, Bill Oates is the best rector of a preparatory school in the country.

They speak differently about the life of the faculty, who seem to be the least powerful, most disfranchised group at St. Paul's. Faculty receive no contracts or terms of appointment. In December they receive a letter from the rector stipulating the next year's salary. (The one I saw was a xeroxed form letter with name and details written by hand.) Occasionally there is a mild word of encouragement or support, but letters usually are short, and explicit only about salary. Faculty do not view these letters as perfunctory. Even those faculty who feel confident about their work and contributions to St. Paul's silently worry about their fate on that December day when letters arrive in the mailbox. One of the younger faculty saw an older member—"a lifer, as the kids call them," at St. Paul's over forty years—tremble as he opened his anxiously awaited letter. "It was then that I began to think something was wrong with the system," she said.

Although the notion of a system that works without contractual arrangements seems archaic in this day and age, all faculty do not see this as a problem. As a matter of fact, there seems to be a fairly clear line of demarcation between the old and the new faculty. The old, themselves raised in preparatory institutions, many from very privileged backgrounds and steeped in the traditions and habits of St. Paul's, see little problem in the established patterns of the faculty role. At times they view the new faculty's demands as irreverent, whining, and threatening to the comfortable stability of the place. New faculty, who tend to come from less affluent backgrounds (without an independent income), many of whom were not raised in similar exclusive schools, are more likely to view themselves as professionals and to want some of the legal and contractual safeguards. Says one new faculty, "On almost every vote there is a divided faculty. It makes it impossible to make any progress on most of these issues."

Although there is a divided view of faculty privilege within the current system, most seem to agree that beyond the walls of St. Paul's the faculty have options open to them that are extraordinary indeed. One of the first things the rector mentions in my conversation with him is his attempts to provide support and encouragement for faculty growth and development. He has gone out and

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raised funds for the generous provision of faculty leaves, travel, and study. The faculty have a full paid year of leave, travel grants for the summer that will be raised to $3,500 next year, and study and tuition grants for further graduate study. Recently the rector arranged for the endowment of the Dickie Fellowship program, a program of visiting scholars and experts in the various fields of study offered at St. Paul's. Each year every department can invite to the campus for two days a nationally renowned person in their field who will offer counsel, support, and advice to the faculty. These visits offer renewal and an opportunity for reflection and self-criticism.

All of these life-giving benefits seem critical to the survival of faculty members, who must give themselves to their work at St. Paul's seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day. It is a special kind of work that demands an extraordinary level of commitment and participation. All faculty must live on campus; all must attend chapel and evening meals with students. Beyond their classroom teaching, they are required to coach sports every afternoon, counsel and advise students on a daily basis, and serve as dormitory residents with disciplinary and overseeing chores. This is a total institution, one that blends the realms of work and play, private and public roles, and parenting and teaching. The rector chooses faculty who he judges will embrace the totality, not resist it. Some faculty are superb in the classroom, but are let go because they do not give totally to the community. A faculty member must be ready to offer his full and complete commitment. "It is a life with a different kind of rhythm," says the rector, a rhythm different from those that shape the work life of most other adults. The full-time commitments of faculty are balanced by "twenty-two days off at Christmas, twenty-two days for spring break, and thirteen weeks of summer vacation." Despite the generous periods of time off, the demands on faculty are extreme, and one wonders why faculty do not break down under the pressure or rise up in revolt. Surely some people must thrive on this life-style. The totality of commitment feels comfortable; the inclusive quality embraces them as well. Others must find ways "to get others to nurture them . . . so they don't go dead in the process. . . . Unless we give to ourselves or find others who will give to us, then the demands of this life are too extreme." Returning to graduate study provides this for some. As one faculty member put it when he began to take courses at Harvard, "Finally I had to do something for myself." Outside study may offer intellectual stimulation, adult interaction, and a great escape from the boundaries of St Paul's. But most speak of their sojourns to the university as a time of nurturing, a time to give to themselves in a way they have had to give to others. It is what the students call "a feed," a filling up on goodies that helps to sustain faculty through a work life that often feels selfless and other-directed.

Faculty life, therefore, is precariously balanced between giving out and taking in, with pressures from above and below. They must be willing to fulfill the multiple roles of teacher, counselor, parent, and even confidant to students, all requiring adultlike responsibilities. But they must be willing to leave their fate in the hands of a benign, but authoritarian, rector, to assume a childlike role in relation to the supreme parent. There could be tension, then, between the demands of the mature authority required of them in relation to the students and the docility necessary to submit to an even greater authority. For some,

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there may be comfort in the ultimate submissiveness of their position, a comfort that allows them to respond fully to student needs and demands. For others, I imagine, there is a contradiction between how they are treated and the roles they are asked to assume in relation to students, a contradiction that forces some to leave, others to find external sources of stimulation and support, and some to become stagnant and dissatisfied, no longer in touch with their needs.

Between Two Worlds: A Minority Perspective

The majority of St. Paul's students come from families of affluence and privilege. They have the casual certainty and demeanor of entitlement that reflects their upper-middle-class status. Many already have the *savoir-faire* and cosmopolitan style of people much beyond their years. Their Calvin Klein T-shirts, Gloria Vanderbilt jeans, L. L. Bean jackets, and Nikon cameras dangling from their necks show restrained opulence. Their sophistication is accompanied by an open friendliness. Every student I spoke with responded to my questions willingly and spontaneously. Some approached me with generous words of welcome and eagerly told of their experiences at St. Paul's. Their stories of life at the school were uniformly positive. They praised the rector, their teachers, the academic program, and the school's rituals and ceremonies. Mostly they echoed the rector's words of "love and caring." There were the typical and expectable complaints about dress codes and dormitory rules, but surprising praise for the food. For most students, St. Paul's is an inspiring and demanding place where they feel challenged and rewarded.

A decade ago St. Paul's became coeducational, and girls now make up 40 percent of the student body. The theme of the Graduation Symposium this year focused on the first decade of coeducation at St. Paul's. Several fifth-form and sixth-form students (including a boy from Central America and a black girl from New York), and a female faculty member with the longest tenure at the school, gave short presentations about their experiences with, and perceptions of, coeducation. The presenters were carefully selected by departmental heads and the rector. Speeches were written, critiqued by faculty, and rewritten several times. One student, exasperated by the close scrutiny, complained of the "censoring" of her ideas when she tried to speak her mind. But the public stories that emerged conveyed the success and richness of coeducation at St. Paul's. Said one student enthusiastically:

> "As males and females living together, day to day, we see each other both at our strongest and at our most vulnerable moments. We encounter each other in the classroom—and at breakfast. Superficiality *cannot* survive fried eggs in the morning. Casual, regular interaction compels a better knowledge of ourselves.
>
> "In my personal experience here at St. Paul's, I have seen a great change in my own ways of thinking, one that I had not been consciously aware of, but a change that I had taken for granted. In my first year I tended to think of people in distinct male or female roles. Now I realize by encountering people in a coeducational setting that I must free them to be

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individuals, free them to develop the full spectrum of human responses and potential."

The audience of parents and alumni greeted the messages with polite, but restrained, response. Even with the rector's encouragement of candor, the audience did not speak of what was on their minds: the issue of sexual norms and practices among the boys and girls.

To a visitor, the girls at St. Paul's seem fully integrated into the setting. They are serious athletes, sensitive artists, bright and inquiring students, aggressive journalists, and student leaders. In ten years the comfortable assimilation of girls into the historically all-male environment appears to have been accomplished. There are other signs of the incorporating arms of St. Paul's. Admissions committees stress their concern for diversity among the student body. In a small history seminar I visited, the students came from all over the country and the world: New York City, Denver, San Francisco, Maine, Germany, Japan, and South Africa.

Less impressive is the minority presence at St. Paul's. Black and brown faces are few. A black student says that blacks now make up 4 percent of the student body; a more knowledgeable source claims a 7 percent Afro-American presence. I was eager to learn about the history and experience of blacks at St. Paul's, and turned to Lester Brown, one of two black faculty and the new assistant dean of admissions. Brown's perspective reveals an intriguing blend of historical recollections and contemporary views.

A student at St. Paul's from 1969 to 1973, Brown graduated with an engineering degree from the University of Pennsylvania and has returned to St. Paul's for his first job. He was born and raised in West Philadelphia and calls himself a "Philadelphia boy." He went to school, not in the familiar black territory of West Philly, but in Kensington, a working-class Irish-Catholic neighborhood, where he experienced open hostility and some violence toward blacks. It was a fiery, dangerous time. He rode the elevated streetcars and buses on his hour-and-a-half trek to school. And his walk from the streetcar to the school sometimes had to be protected by police and national guardsmen. Because Kensington was a magnet school with special resources and a more academic climate, Brown decided to become "a sacrificial lamb." He soon discovered that the white kids inside were friendly and good, while the white kids outside were hateful. "It was not a matter of race, but of how you behaved, that counted." He and two other buddies from West Philadelphia were discovered and "adopted" by a generous Jewish woman, a volunteer in the school who offered them "cultural enrichment," friendship, guidance, and support. Brown called her "my fairy godmother." Everything she touched magically turned into something good. It would happen invisibly. "We didn't know how things happened. Suddenly, everything would come together." So it was with Brown's coming to St. Paul's. When he was about to go on to high school, this woman asked him about his plans. He had thought of going to Central High School, a Philadelphia school with a good reputation, but she said, "You know, Lester, there are other options you should consider." Without much effort, he and his two friends found themselves spread apart in fancy private schools, far away from family.

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Brown remembers the transition to St. Paul's as immediate and easy. His experience with "good whites" in the Kensington school allowed him not to prejudge or stereotype his white peers at St. Paul's. When Brown arrived in 1969, a strong, cohesive group of black students provided solace, support, and a source of identity for individual blacks. (Brown remembers forty-five blacks in the school then as compared to twenty-three eleven years later.) A strong group consciousness permitted individuals to move forcefully out into the sea of whiteness and not feel overwhelmed or confused. Brown remembers the leader of the group, a strong, articulate political figure, who gained respect and some measure of fear from faculty and students. He was not considered radical, but he was disciplined and outspoken, and everyone knew he was serious.

Blacks were a clear presence on the campus in the early seventies. "Believe it or not, we even had a Third World Room, a space we could make our own, decorate the way we wanted to, a place to gather." The energy and vitality of this cohesive black group infected the campus. Aretha Franklin and Ray Charles could be heard across the manicured lawns; poetry readings portrayed black voices; and parties were dominated by a black spirit. "We were so sure of ourselves, we invited the *whites* in!" The irony of their success as a strong and dynamic force on the campus is that it led to their own demise and failure. Soon there was little differentiation between whites and blacks. The boundaries that helped them establish their identity, that made them strong enough to reach out, have eroded and blurred.

Now the Afro-American Coalition has become the Third World Cultural Group. "Coalition" was seen by faculty and students as an overly political symbol, and the "Afro-American" image was deemed too exclusive. In its recent incarnation the Third World Cultural Group is an integrated club, generously sprinkled with whites. It has no clear identity or purpose, and many say it should be disbanded. "It's not doing anything for anybody." Others say it should be expanded to include a more generalized service role. There are more than fifty people signed up for the Third World Cultural Group—"It looks good on their college applications." Rarely do more than ten or twelve show up at meetings. This year a white girl seems to be a favorite choice for president, a far cry from the spirit and ideology of the early seventies.

All recognize that the transitions within St. Paul's are a reflection of changes beyond the walls of the school. With fewer cities bursting into flames, with a lessening in the threat of violence and force, and with a softening in the rhetoric of black consciousness, the thrust of affirmative action has diminished. Additionally, many blacks are more hesitant about becoming "sacrificial lambs." In the last several years the black-applicant pool at St. Paul's has yielded fewer and fewer qualified students. Increasingly, prospective students have been turned off and intimidated by approaches and images that have worked well with their more privileged white counterparts. Since his return, one of Brown's major roles has been the recruitment of minority students. His active and sustained efforts have produced a significantly larger applicant pool that will bring fifteen third-form black students to the school next fall, a major ripple in the still waters of St. Paul's.

Even those who have worried about the invisible and weakened status of blacks at St. Paul's do not seem to be suggesting retrenchment or a return to

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isolation and separatism. But many black students do speak of the need for a swelling of numbers and an encouragement (or at least validation) of togetherness. Group consciousness now seems to symbolize weakness rather than strength. The third-form and fourth-form boys who play junior varsity basketball together have found a way to withstand these negative perceptions of their groupiness. They justify their togetherness by claiming that they have athletics, not necessarily race, in common. According to Brown, the black girls have no such vehicle for group awareness, and so they suffer more from isolation at the school.

Class also divides the group. Most black students come from working-class urban backgrounds in New York, Chicago, and Boston. When they come to St. Paul's, they are overwhelmed by the abundance and plenty that surrounds them. At first, nothing is taken for granted. "They appreciate the green grass and woods; they appreciate the gym floor; they appreciate the room accommodations." It takes them almost a year to make the major cultural shift, to cross the class/ethnic boundaries and begin to feel comfortable. At the same time, they are required to make a difficult academic leap. Courses at St. Paul's demand a kind of thinking they have never experienced in their prior schooling. "They've never had to think before." They are expected to be questioning and articulate, and their academic skills are not as practiced or sophisticated as their peers'. The dual demands of cultural assimilation and academic competence bear down on them with great force. It is amazing that they hang in, survive the onslaughts, and return the next year ready to face the challenges.

But where does this lead? Most likely, a prestigious college career will follow. Next fall Cheryl will go to Amherst. Others have gone to Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Williams. Stephen, the only black boy in the sixth form, will not go immediately on to college. He will travel to Spain, with no clear plans, no job lined up, and no facility in Spanish. His career plans seem to be distantly related to his travels. He hopes one day to enter the foreign service, and he wants "to get Spanish under his belt." But he seems apologetic about his vagueness, adrift and alone in the school. Stephen and Cheryl will be sad when school ends and they will have to return to New York and Chicago for the summer. "We have no friends at home," they say. Away from family and friends for four years, they are strangers at home, feel distant and awkward in their old neighborhoods, and will miss returning to the now-safe environment of St. Paul's. Their profound connection to the school and their sense of disconnection and alienation from home seem to be related to what Lester Brown describes as the "breeding of arrogance." He fears that successful accommodation by blacks to St. Paul's means they are likely to leave as "different people," with well-socialized feelings of entitlement and superiority borrowed from peers, from faculty, and from a culture that inevitably separates them from their own people and, perhaps, from themselves. The naturally smiling and open face of Lester Brown grimaces at the thought. He, too, feels implicated and guilty about his participation in this process of cultural and personal transformation.

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PHILIP W. JACKSON

Secondary Schooling for the Privileged Few: A Report on a Visit to a New England Boarding School

> St. Paul's in the late 1970s could be viewed as a kind of modern utopia, but even utopias have their day.
>
> —August Heckscher
> *St. Paul's: The Life of a New England School*[1]

ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL IN CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE, *does* come close to being a modern Utopia. No one who has visited the school could possibly dispute that judgment. August Heckscher's added warning—that what is true of St. Paul's today will not be so forever—also seems irrefutable. Given the fate of all prior attempts to establish an earthly paradise, how could it be otherwise? But for the time being, at least, we can say that St. Paul's is much closer to being utopian than most secondary schools have ever been or ever will be.

To lump St. Paul's with secondary schools in general is not exactly fair, not even for the purpose of comparison. Its students are of high-school age, and it covers the customary four-year span of grades commonly numbered nine through twelve (the equivalent divisions at St. Paul's are called "forms," as in England, and are numbered three through six). But the school itself differs in so many ways from high schools past and present that comparison is almost meaningless. It is private, *not* public. It is church-related (Episcopal), *not* secular. It is a boarding, *not* a day, school. And it is a prep school, *not* a comprehensive high school, which means that each of its students is headed for college, most to a nearby Ivy League school. As if all this were not enough, St. Paul's is spread over some seventeen hundred acres in a sleepy valley in scenic New England, *not* standing raw and exposed, flush against Main Street, at the edge of some windswept town in the Central Plains, or squeezed in, cramped and grimy, amid boarded-up buildings and used car lots in one of our Northern cities.

These are characteristics of a well-known type of institution collectively known as "the top Eastern prep schools," whose chief function is to educate the sons and daughters of America's various elites. To those who know about such things, St. Paul's stands near the head of this distinguished group of institutions. It is the only New England boarding school I have ever visited, and on the basis of what I learned during two visits—the first for just a day, the second

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for three days—I would not dispute that judgment. There may well be better prep schools than St. Paul's, but it is difficult to imagine one.

I went to St. Paul's both to learn something about the inner workings of a good school and to see what might be put to use in making ordinary high schools, including the ones in windswept towns and decaying cities, better than they are. Thus this essay addresses two interrelated questions. What makes St. Paul's such a special place, what accounts for its success as an institution? And can those conditions be re-created elsewhere? In particular, can they be established, either partially or wholly, in average, even below average, secondary schools? What can St. Paul's teach us about how to improve schools in general?

* * *

What accounts for St. Paul's success, what makes it so special? The easy answer, and certainly the first that occurs to the impressionable visitor, is everything. Students, teachers, curriculum, traditions, living arrangements, physical setting, purposes and policies—all seem exactly right, or very close to it. Moreover, their interrelatedness, the way they reinforce and complement each other, makes each component's unique contribution difficult to isolate. The whole is indeed more than the sum of its parts. Still, I shall treat the school's major strengths singly, starting conveniently with the most obvious, although not necessarily the truest, ones. For my larger purpose of finding what in St. Paul's can help high schools in general, this strategy saves the good news till last, ending optimistically what might otherwise be a rather discouraging report.

The students are a very special group, numbering fewer than five hundred, an extraordinarily small number, given the size of the campus and the number of applicants. About fifteen hundred apply each year, of which eleven hundred are considered "good"—or admissible—and of these, 140 are chosen. The chances of being admitted, even among those who meet the standards, are not very great. What are those standards? The school's catalogue describes them as follows:

> St. Paul's School seeks boys and girls of good character, who have demonstrated scholastic achievement, who hold promise for future accomplishment, and who will make the fullest use of the School's resources.
>
> There are always many candidates—far more than the School can admit in any one year—who meet these criteria. Those offered admission are students who are ably suited to respond to the total offering of St. Paul's School, and who will bring to the School a wide range of interests, abilities, and talents.

Almost every student who is accepted is not only outstanding academically, but is—to the extent that such things can be judged in advance—a well-rounded, outgoing person. In addition, many of St. Paul's students excel in one or another of the performing arts. And though parental desires certainly play a role in determining who applies to St. Paul's (as is true for all private schools),

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almost every student admitted seems not only to go along with his or her parent's wishes, but does so more than willingly. The several dozen students I spoke with confirmed this. Without exception, they were highly enthusiastic about St. Paul's and about being there. Finally, the school actively seeks out applicants from minority groups, providing financial support if needed, both to these and to a small number of talented young people, not members of minorities but of families of modest means. These students add appreciable diversity to the student body.

The physical appearance and manner of the students I met seem to attest to how well these admission policies and procedures work. One would have to search very far to find a brighter-looking, more affable collection of young people. Having such "raw materials" to start with, many would say, comes close to being a sufficient condition for the success of any school. One need not agree totally to acknowledge that this judgment contains a fair amount of truth.

Although the quality of teaching (a subject I will take up in greater detail later) as in most schools is not a readily observable feature, linked to this, and far more obvious, is the sheer size of the instructional staff. St. Paul's employs over eighty teachers. There is a 6 to 1 student/teacher ratio at St. Paul's, compared with the average ratio of 14 to 1 for grades nine through twelve of the public schools.

What this means in terms of the quality of education comes into sharper focus when we compare the average class size at St. Paul's, twelve or thirteen students, to the twenty-five or more in most public schools. Small classes are not *always* better than large ones, nor is it likely that the teachers at St. Paul's invariably utilize fully every opportunity to give individual help to their students. What teacher anywhere does? But the *opportunity* to do so is greater at St. Paul's than at most public high schools, a fact, many educators would insist, that contains more information about the quality of a school than do most others. James B. Conant in his well-known study of the comprehensive high school in America had this to say:

> *If one is seeking any one single criterion to use as the basis for a first approximation to a judgment as to the adequacy of the offerings of a medium-size widely comprehensive school, the certified professional staff-student ratio is to be recommended.*[2]

St. Paul's has, in addition, a staff of over one hundred, from janitors to administrative aides, from cafeteria workers to infirmary nurses. Comparable figures on noninstructional staff serving the average public school are not available, but it seems fairly certain that these figures would not be anywhere near as great as at St. Paul's. How this large staff contributes directly to the quality of education at the school is hard to estimate and may perhaps be negligible, but that it contributes greatly to the quality of life there, and thus to the success of the school in general, is certain.

Another important raw material, and hence an additional explanation of St. Paul's success, is the school's physical layout and facilities—"some 1700 acres of woods and open land surrounding over 300 acres of lakes and ponds, and over 80 buildings, including its Gothic chapel, modern classrooms and laboratories,

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library, auditorium, dormitories, art center, faculty homes, and extensive athletic facilities." But this brief description from St. Paul's catalogue does not begin to highlight the educational significance of the items listed, nor does it convey the atmosphere of abundance created by the whole. The library, for example, houses some fifty thousand volumes. To appreciate the library's significance as an educational resource, compare this number to the average holdings of the nation's public high-school libraries—a mere seven thousand volumes in the mid-1970s and surely not much greater today. Moreover, unlike libraries in the public schools, St. Paul's remains open every weekday evening and is open during part of the weekend as well.

Again, the simply labeled "extensive athletic facilities" are resources that must be described to make their significance felt. These facilities include: "four soccer, two field hockey and two football fields, an enclosed artificial hockey rink and three out-door rinks, a well-equipped gymnasium, a tartan-turfed, multi-purpose cage, seven squash courts, three baseball diamonds, girls' and boys' lacrosse fields, a cinder track, fourteen tennis courts, and a one-and-one-quarter mile rowing course"—not to speak of the bus that runs regularly in the winter to Pat's Peak, a nearby skiing area. Nor does the catalogue mention the miles of jogging and hiking paths that wind through quiet woods and along the shores of lakes and ponds. And I cannot speak of these without saying at least a word about the overall beauty of St. Paul's.

It is a quiet beauty, true enough, for the campus offers no breathtaking vistas. But what the landscape lacks in drama, it makes up for in other ways. The charm of the New England countryside blends with an atmosphere of academic repose—gleaming white clapboard houses framed by evergreens and set against a bright blue sky, small groups of students, books in hand, sauntering by the shore of a reflecting pond, a Gothic tower silhouetted by the setting sun, its bells tolling softly at the close of day. More than pleasing to the eye, this ambience is positively idyllic. How much such surroundings contribute to the success of the school is hard to say, but there is no doubt that they contribute something, perhaps quite a bit.

To anyone who knows about the costs of running a school, and perhaps even those who don't, St. Paul's huge professional staff and its physical surroundings spell one thing and one thing only—high costs. Indeed, once these expenses are covered in a school's budget, there's not much left to pay for. This being so, it is tempting to conclude that money is the chief difference between St. Paul's and most other schools; all else is secondary. The relevant statistics bear out that conclusion. St. Paul's spends in excess of $10,000 per pupil annually, as compared to just under an average $2,500 per pupil in public high schools. Though part of that difference lies in dormitory upkeep and the like, the difference after these costs are deducted is still consequential. Without such an enormous outlay of money, St. Paul's enviable teacher/pupil ratio and the grandness of the physical plant and setting could not be maintained. Were these to disappear, St. Paul's crop of outstanding students would surely go as well. Thus money seems to be a key to what makes a school like St. Paul's possible.

Yet, although wealth may be a *necessary* condition for the success of such a school—and this seems an inescapable conclusion—it is by no means a *sufficient*

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condition. One can imagine a well-staffed school that is not doing its job very well. One can imagine even more easily a school nestled in beautiful surroundings and blessed with a surfeit of buildings and physical equipment that hardly deserved to be called a school at all. And even to have outstanding students, who come attracted by the promise of small classes, idyllic campus scenes, and all the rest is no guarantee that the school will do an outstanding job of educating them.

Money and the things it can buy, though obviously very important, are not adequate to explain the success of a school like St. Paul's. What, then, makes it work so well? The answer calls for a further examination of the school's structure and inner workings.

Two features that might be thought of as potentially contributing to St. Paul's success, yet ones that do so obliquely, if at all, are the school's status as a boarding school and its church-relatedness. My time at St. Paul's did not allow an answer regarding the educational advantages of each, yet they merit at least some passing comment.

A boarding school has two rather obvious advantages. First, a school whose students remain on its premises all day, every day, has more time to get in its "licks" than the school whose students are around only for the average school day and week, as in public high schools. Second, the boarding school can better protect its students from various nonschool *mis*educative experiences and influences, such as activities that cut into the time needed for study (viewing television, for example) or the companionship of persons who are not serious about education.

Does St. Paul's capitalize on the advantages as much as it might? I cannot answer that question totally, but a few encouraging signs lead me to think it might. The school has Saturday classes, and its weekday classes extend into the early evening hours (with a mid-afternoon break for sports). The library appears to be heavily used by students right up till closing time. Almost all faculty members live on or near campus and take many of their meals with the students in their dining halls. These signs and others provide strong evidence that the school's educational influence extends well beyond the usual classroom setting and remains active for a larger portion of each student's waking hours than is true of most public schools.

How well does St. Paul's succeed in sheltering its students from bad influences and miseducative experiences? Again, my time there was too brief for comment, but the *opportunity* to monitor the total experiences of its students, to filter out negative influences, is great. Educationally speaking, that opportunity is a definite plus.

The educational advantages of being church-related are not nearly as obvious and straightforward, and do not translate easily into simple and direct benefits. Indeed, staunch defenders of public education might argue against there being *any* educational advantages connected with a school being church-related. A few might even insist that, from a purely educational standpoint, church-relatedness of any kind is always a distinct *dis*advantage.

Without seeking to take sides in the long-standing debate over public versus parochial education, church-affiliated schools do have somewhat of an advantage with respect to one very important class of educational goals: those having

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to do with what used to be called character development and what is now more commonly referred to as moral education. Tacitly, at least, all such schools have declared themselves to be concerned, often primarily so, with the spiritual well-being of their students, legitimating a broad range of educational activities that otherwise might be considered dubious undertakings in schools serving a pluralistic society. This is not to say that educational activities aimed at character-building or moral development are indefensible in the public schools, only that their defense lacks the kind of backing that an affiliation with a particular set of religious doctrines gives.

I have little firsthand knowledge to assess how well St. Paul's makes use of its church affiliation to achieve educational goals. Attendance at chapel, religious studies in the curriculum, and the school's strong emphasis on community and fellowship (both sanctioned religiously) no doubt contribute to educational outcomes having to do with character. What *is* evident is that St. Paul's makes use of religious sanctions and ceremonies—including the use of sacred texts, religious symbols, and prayer—that are explicitly prohibited in public schools today.

These more obvious ways in which St. Paul's differs from the average public high school lead to a rather unpleasant, but hardly surprising, conclusion. Ordinary high schools are not only worse off, sometimes much worse off, than St. Paul's in all the ways described, but they are probably going to stay that way for a very long time. The gap between St. Paul's and the average American high school appears unbridgeable. Were we to stop here in our search for ways to make schools in general more like St. Paul's, we would have to conclude that the prospect looks bleak indeed.

Fortunately, we need not stop here. But we must now turn to the less obvious, but no less distinctive, aspects of the school—curriculum, the way its teachers instruct, and what the overall purpose or mission of St. Paul's is. This shift in perspective from the more to the less obvious is risky, made even more so by the briefness of my stays at the school, which allowed for only a crude impression of most of the matters yet to be discussed. Readers would do well to keep in mind the impressionistic nature of much that follows. Further, I shall restrict my discussion to three broad generalizations about what seems to me to make St. Paul's such a good school. I believe the truth of two of these to be practically incontrovertible, even though my grounds for saying so are shakier than I would like. The third is far more speculative, though sufficiently supported by observation to warrant calling it something other than pure conjecture. I describe it as a working hypothesis backed by some firsthand observation.

The first two generalizations relate to St. Paul's overall mission and its curriculum. With respect to mission, the school is much more ambitious in the scope of its undertaking than the average high school. With respect to curriculum, it is much more demanding and much more traditional than most public high schools.

The third, admittedly less confident generalization relates to the quality of teaching at St. Paul's. The difference here is one of focus. St. Paul's teachers appear to place much greater emphasis on clear thinking and critical analysis than do most high-school teachers that I remember or hear about today.

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These three differences are especially intriguing in that each holds the promise of closing, or at least narrowing, the gap that separates a school like St. Paul's from the average American high school. That possibility, which is by no means free of controversy, will be treated more fully following a brief discussion of the reasoning behind each generalization.

To become real, as opposed to merely potential, the advantages of being both a boarding and church-related school must be exploited, and other opportunities to extend the scope of the school's influence acted upon. For this to happen, some persons or groups connected with the school must conceive of the school's mission in terms far broader than the usual curricular objectives that guide the design of courses and the writing of textbooks. They must see it as making a difference not just in what students *know*, but in what they *are* and in what they *become*. This is an old conception, much older, in fact, than the modern epistemological view that the school's chief function is to dispense knowledge and skills.

Without question, the present administration and staff of St. Paul's willingly embrace something like this more ambitious goal. In so doing, they are perpetuating an educational vision that has been alive and active at St. Paul's since the school's founding more than a century ago. An expression of this concern, in very abbreviated form, is contained in one of the present rector's recent addresses to the faculty at the beginning of the term.

> My first observation is that we are first and foremost an educational institution, organized and supported for the purpose of helping young students grow and develop and mature into strong young adults. Our principal activities are controlled by that primary responsibility. Everything we do—our actions and efforts in class, on the athletic fields, in dormitories, in the dining rooms, in activities—every action everywhere is rooted in this primary responsibility.[3]

Though the rector states quite explicitly the school's concern for the total development of its students, his words do not begin to reveal the mechanisms for exercising the school's responsibilities. In particular, they say nothing about the multiple ways in which the lives of the students and the life of the school become intertwined. Though the school is surely interested in helping students grow into strong young adults, this is accomplished in no small measure by doing something else: producing students who are proud of their school and of their place in it, and who later become its loyal alumni.

This fusing of identities, the process by which a newcomer to St. Paul's begins to think of himself or herself as a "Paulie," and later, one of the school's "old boys" or "old girls," is an extremely complicated, but not entirely mysterious, process. It is routinely accomplished in many colleges today, particularly those that are most prestigious, by traditions, rituals, ceremonies, inspirational rhetoric, competitive athletics, physical reminders of an honored past, school songs, mottoes, colors, ties, emblems, and more. Each in its own way helps to cement the student's identity with his Alma Mater and, in so doing, helps to make the values espoused by the school the student's own.

St. Paul's uses many, if not all, to good advantage. Oak panels engraved with the names of every graduate adorn the dining hall walls. Memorial Hall honors "old boys" who served in the two World Wars. Portraits of past rectors

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and beloved teachers look down on passersby in almost every building on campus. In short, history and tradition intrude at every turning, their message crystal clear. It says to students in particular that this institution has a noble past, and they are now a part of it. It says too that they have a vast community of supporters, living and dead, who are and were proud of their connection with the school and who, were those gone able to express themselves, would expect the same of those there today.

There is, as well, fully as strong a need for students to become immersed in the living community of the school. This conjoining of past and present in the successful enactment of a school's function is compellingly described by Michael Oakeshott, the British political philosopher, in an essay on the failings of modern education.

> The idea "School" is that of an historic community of teachers and learners, neither large nor small, with traditions of its own, evoking loyalties, pieties and affections, devoted to initiating successive generations of newcomers to the human scene into the *grandeurs* and servitudes of being human; an Alma Mater who remembers with pride or indulgence and is remembered with gratitude. The marks of a good school are that in it learning may be recognized as, itself, a golden satisfaction which needs no adventitious gilding to recommend it; and that it bestows upon its alumni the gift of a childhood recollected, not as a passage of time hurried through on the way to more profitable engagements, but, with gratitude, as an enjoyed initiation into the mysteries of a human condition: the gift of self-knowledge and of a satisfying intellectual and moral identity.[4]

Almost every one of Oakeshott's phrases might have been inspired by St. Paul's. Few other schools, I suspect, are equally deserving of that compliment.

Given the selective nature of the student body and their educational destinations as graduates, the school's demanding curriculum—solid offerings in math, science, literature, foreign languages, history, and the arts—is no surprise. But that such offerings seem only natural may cause us to overlook the broader significance of such studies in the lives of the students introduced to them and, even more important, the significance of missing out on such an opportunity during the formative years of life.

Why does it seem natural that students at a school like St. Paul's would study math and science and history rather than, say, distributive education or homemaking or applied marketing skills? Obviously, because they *need* such studies to get into college. St. Paul's School and others like it are *prep* schools; their chief function is to prepare students for college. But beyond that, they are also being prepared for something else, to become intelligent and discriminating consumers of, and possibly someday contributors to, the very best our culture has to offer in ideas, artistic achievements, and all the rest of it. In short, they are being prepared to become the true inheritors of the legacy of humankind's intellectual riches. An overblown way, perhaps, of talking about what goes on in a high-school math class or biology lesson or history discussion group, but to put it in such terms may, needfully, jar our sensibilities and cause us to rethink what schooling, beyond the ostensible goal of moving students up the educational ladder, is really about. In rethinking the aims of schooling, especially the long-term consequences of *not* studying the kinds of subjects offered at a school

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like St. Paul's, we would, I think, form a very different perspective on the high-school curriculum than that dominant today. I will dwell further on this after a brief discussion of the last of my three generalizations.

One of the things that impressed me most about St. Paul's was how often during my observations of classes students were encouraged to think on their own and to make up their own minds about things. They were encouraged, too, to be critical, albeit in a kindly manner, of the opinions of their classmates, of their teachers, and of the books and materials they were working with. These classes, however, were not characterized by a nitpicking contentiousness, but rather by ease and attentiveness, teacher and students unself-consciously absorbed in the task at hand.

In a few classes, in an exercise of what might be called "empathic imagination," the students put themselves in the place of a writer or thinker to write or think as he or she might, as a way of "getting inside" a particular way of thinking or artistic style, to get the feel of it and, in so doing, to become, at least partially, its master. Here again, something like a critical spirit seemed to be at play in the class, a spirit that appears to suffuse the school's instructional program. I may, of course, have misperceived. Perhaps a similar spirit equally pervades high schools in general. But the memory of my own high-school experience and observations of public high-school classrooms that I have made over the years say otherwise.

At St. Paul's such occasions of critical orientation that I witnessed meshed with the curriculum being offered. As educational goals, the transmission of culture and the development of critical acumen are made for each other. Without criticism, the full appreciation of our cultural heritage becomes impossible, and we are left with dictated tastes and secondhand opinions.

Mine are by no means original thoughts. Rousseau, for one, expressed similar sentiments with much greater force more than two hundred years ago! But they seem to have fallen from grace of late, both for those educators and that part of the public who believe that the very best we can do for large segments of American youth is to equip them with marketable skills, and for those who place comfort before excellence as the goal of human striving.

In sum, St. Paul's School seems to be rather unlike most public high schools in three major ways: it is more systematic and self-conscious in its efforts to have an impact on the total development of its students, it offers a more demanding and culturally rich curriculum, and it appears to place a relatively heavy emphasis on clear and critical thought and expression. Three additional points about these generalizations are necessary.

First, all three refer to conditions that separate St. Paul's from other schools—if they do at all—*by matters of degree only*. No school exists that is *totally* unconcerned about the overall development of its students or whose curriculum is *totally* devoid of intellectual demands and cultural richness. And no school exists in which *no one* cares how well and how clearly its students think and write.

Second, there is nothing *necessarily* inhibiting most other schools from moving toward these goals if they chose to do so. There may well be genuine

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limits to how far they might go. No public school, for example, can become a boarding school, no matter how much its teachers might like to extend their influence over the lives of their students. Similarly, many schools may never be able to have a large enough staff to make certain kinds of activities, such as intensive essay writing, economically feasible. In principle, however, most schools can become more like St. Paul's than they are.

Third, and somewhat in the nature of a plea, is my belief that all high schools that *can* move toward these goals should obviously do so. This plea is intended to apply with equal force to public high-school students currently preparing for college and to those students who are *not* college-bound.

More attention to total development, meatier courses, greater emphasis on clear thought—and all three for everyone, from the youngster who may wind up behind the counter at McDonald's to the one heading for the Ivy League. Is such a thing possible? Would we want it if it were? Such questions call attention to the controversial nature of the proposals I have made, as well as open up the realization that these proposals are not novel. They have been made—and criticized—before.

Yet, despite their familiarity to everyone who is interested in education, and whose memory or knowledge of history goes back far enough, suggestions such as these demand continual reexamination in the light of changing times. Each comes close to being what W. B. Gallie, the British philosopher of history, has called "essentially contested concepts," key ideas that have been with us for centuries but whose meanings undergo significant change with each succeeding generation. Such notions, Gallie asserts, are always in a state of contest and change as we seek to bring them up to date with the times. And so it is, I suspect, with our thoughts about how schooling should be conducted. Here, too, we cannot escape the necessity of reexamining the old in the light of the new.

One of the chief criticisms that has been leveled at the concept of culture when it is used in an educational context is that it smacks of elitism and social snobbery. Critics point out that there is no single culture in our society. "We are a pluralistic nation," they say, "with many cultures. And who is to say that any one of them should be the standard for us all? Why should the ruling class or classes dictate what everyone should know?" And so on. An argument familiar enough to most people—as is the countervailing defense of "high culture" (as distinguished from "pop" culture)—to obviate further elaboration. Insofar as the issue bears on educational practices in the high school, it calls for but two passing comments.

The Devil need be given his due. Practicing educators, like it or not, must acknowledge that the antielitist position has some obvious merit. A look at how tastes are established and values set, in the arts and elsewhere, does reveal the hegemony of a ruling class—"the tastemakers," as Russell Lynes once called them. Moreover, there can be no doubt that the tastemaking authority of the social elite functions in part to reinforce existing cleavages between and among social classes as well as racial and ethnic groups. To put it bluntly, the defenders of "high culture" *do* sometimes make use of that distinction to keep people of "low brow" tastes and habits "in their place." The dynamics of that conservative

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use of culture and its partial intrusion into the affairs of schooling seem to me to be beyond dispute.

Yet it is equally obvious that the stock arguments against foisting an "elitist" culture on the unwilling masses of students in our schools have weaknesses of their own that educators are obliged to point out. In particular, they must defend vigorously the idea that there are criteria of cultural worth and achievement that transcend social class, criteria that arise from the continued and corrigible exercise of human intelligence and rationality as conditioned by historical setting, and not from the whims or fancies of a particular ruling group.

Once the possibility of a class-free "high" culture has been broached, we are in a position to consider what the school's relation to such an entity ought to be. Within a democratic society, at least, the school's obligation seems almost incontrovertible. It must serve as the primary agency for the dissemination of that culture to as many of the nation's citizens as can possibly be reached and in as full an amount as it is possible to give—directly, by exposing students to the very best their culture has to offer, and indirectly, by training them in skills and habits of thought that will provide lifelong access to stores of cultural wealth.

Though such a proposal expresses a sentiment noble enough to escape most criticism on ideological grounds, it nonetheless has its critics. As it pertains to the curriculum of secondary schools in general, three objections are customarily raised against it: the vast majority of high-school students, we are told, do not *want* the kind of courses that would expose them to the best our culture has to offer or prepare them to do it on their own; they do not *need* such studies in the light of the future that awaits them; and they could not *handle* such studies if they tried. These claims focus attention on the key ideas of *motivation*, *need*, and *ability* as they function within the context of educational discourse. Each calls for a much fuller treatment than can be given here. Nonetheless, a few brief comments seem essential to round out the argument.

The notion that a course of study in high school should be based chiefly, or even largely, on what interests students at the time—and its corollary, that students should not be required to study courses rich in cultural content—is a profoundly misguided doctrine. Criticism of such notions is useless. If educators do not already see the foolishness of that line of reasoning, the cause is lost.

But I suspect most teachers and administrators *do* see the fallacy of removing all limits on such choices, for almost all high schools retain at least minimal constraints in the form of "distribution requirements," credits needed for graduation, and so forth. Yet the trend in secondary education in recent years has been toward a proliferation of curricular offerings and the corresponding expansion of choice, the gradual reduction of requirements of all kinds, and an increasing emphasis on individualized instruction. Hand-in-hand with these changes has been a general loosening of constraints of many other aspects of student activity (e.g., dress codes, "open" campuses) and a corresponding concern over the protection of student rights.

Few would deny that most of the changes are genuine advances over the narrowness of curricular choices and the way high-school students were treated in the past. But has a once healthy trend in certain respects swung out of control? Must it now be checked and possibly even reversed? A growing

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number of educators believe so, as do I. Indeed, as the evidence about the state of today's high schools begins to pile up, any further hesitation about the direction to move in seems more and more a failure of nerve.

It is narrow-minded and patronizing to contend that students who are not college-bound do not *need* much history, math, science, or literature—narrow-minded, because it is based on merely utilitarian notions; patronizing, because it makes tacit assumptions about the kind of life such students will live after leaving high school. In essence, these assumptions proclaim that these students will probably not do the same sorts of things as college-bound students—read "good" books, go to museums and concerts, follow news events in the paper, participate in public affairs, hold lively conversations, and so forth—so why burden them with making sense of English literature, world history, biology, and all the rest of it? They do not *need* such knowledge, given the future that will surely be theirs. To make this assumption is effectively to assure that it will prove accurate—a self-fulfilling prophecy. Basing educational policy on that kind of prediction is something educators could well do without.

The conventional answer to who needs what in the way of academic studies in high school makes more sense to me when turned on its head. It yields the conclusion that those students most in need of science, math, history, and all of the other demanding academic subjects are precisely the ones who are *not* going on to college! Such a proposal is not nearly as preposterous as it may at first sound. It is, in fact, an idea that has been around for some time, and has had the backing of no less prominent an educator than Charles W. Eliot, former president of Harvard and pioneer in the reform of secondary schooling in the United States.

In 1893, as chairman of the historically significant Committee of Ten, which was formed to make recommendations about the standardization of the high-school curriculum and college admission policies, Eliot wrote a report calling for what was, in essence, a college preparatory curriculum for all high-school students. In this scheme, students were to be allowed a choice of four courses—Classical, Latin-Scientific, Modern Languages, and English—any one of which was considered by the Committee to be an adequate preparation for college work. The report came under severe attack from several quarters and from such illustrious figures as G. Stanley Hall, then president of Clark University. Among the complaints that Hall and others raised was that the report overlooked students who were *not* going on to college, which at the time comprised the great bulk of the high-school population. Such students, it was argued, should not be required to study the same subjects (within the framework of the four courses of study) as those planning to continue their education. Instead, they should be given a much lighter and less academic program. To this complaint, Eliot replied:

> The American teacher does not propose to accept the principle that the child whose education is to be shortest should have the scrappiest and least power-giving course, just because the course is to be short. If the course is to be short, there is all the more reason that its elements and their combination should be the best possible. Then the short course will also be good for the children who are going on longer. On the whole, it seems probable that this first proposition laid down by the Committee of Ten . . . is likely to hold its place firmly in the front rank of American secondary-school policies.[5]

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Eliot's prediction was clearly wrong, but it is not at all clear that the educational principle for which he was arguing was itself faulty, then or now.

Yet another argument related to what students *need* to study—which attacks from a different angle the suggestion that something resembling today's college preparatory work be extended to as many students as can handle it—starts with the premise that what students not bound for college need most of all are *jobs*. Courses in science, literature, and the like do not contribute as directly to that end as do vocational courses. Indeed, the former, it is charged, only take up time that could be used more profitably in the development of "marketable skills." Ergo . . .

With youth unemployment as high as it is today, the argument on behalf of vocational, as opposed to general, or college preparatory, studies is not easily dismissed. At the same time, the urgency of the unemployment problem should not allow the argument on behalf of vocational studies to escape criticism. Two reservations in particular are worth mentioning.

First, the goal of vocational training—placement in a job calling for the skills that have been learned—may not be as readily achieved as it is often made out to be. Indeed, there is mounting evidence that large numbers of graduates of such programs, should they find work at all, wind up in jobs that bear little, if any, relationship to the ones for which they were trained. In short, we need to know much more about the success rates of these programs before endorsing them enthusiastically.

Second, we need to know as well whether instruction in *non*vocational subjects, especially those comprising the so-called solid subjects that make up the bulk of most college preparatory programs, is in any way *dys*functional in gaining entry to the world of work, even blue-collar and white-collar work. In fact, the ability to think clearly, to speak and write effectively, and to be broadly aware of what is going on in the world at large would seem to be attractive to employees in almost any occupational setting. But that hypothesis needs rigorous testing.

The third of the three most common arguments against strengthening the curriculum offered these students is the most unflattering of all. It affirms—bluntly—that most students who do not take college preparatory work do so for a very good reason. They are simply too dumb. They could not handle such courses if they tried.

The force of this argument is powerful indeed; it jibes with many other widespread notions about the distribution of intelligence among humans, the relative "toughness" of some school subjects as compared with others, the percentage of the population believed to be capable of doing "college-level" work, and so on. It seems foolish to deny that it contains more than a grain of truth. At the same time, it would be a grave mistake to give in too readily to this argument. I am deeply convinced that most people can do vastly more than is ever demanded of them; more, too, than they customarily demand of themselves. I further suspect, along with many other educators today, that the explanatory power of intellectual ability—as an answer to the question of *who* can do *what*—has been greatly overused in our schools.

What the suggestions in this essay put forward is not the transformation of the average high-school student into something resembling a humanistic scholar or scientist, but merely an increase, albeit a dramatic one, in his exposure to

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good books, historical studies, exercises in critical thinking, and so on. Is it unreasonable to suppose that a young person equipped with the mental power to follow the intricacies of a televised football game might also have what it takes to follow the twists and turns of the plot of a novel by Conrad or Eliot, with, perhaps, far more pleasure derived? I think not. Is more gray matter required to study high-school biology or chemistry than to master the details of bookkeeping or to dismantle and rebuild a car engine? Some would say Yes, but I believe them to be wrong. The fault may be ours. We may lack the knowledge to make such subjects accessible to all or even most students, but that does not mean it cannot be done.

Another objection raised against the views in this essay says that what is being suggested, though attractive enough in the abstract, is impractical because we simply do not have the teachers to do the job. What is more, given the known patterns of recruitment into the teaching profession, we are not likely to garner a teaching force capable of carrying out such a reform in the near, or even the distant, future.

There is some truth in this argument also. Considered *en masse*, public high-school teachers, even teachers in select private schools, no doubt leave a lot to be desired as bearers and transmitters of our cultural heritage and tutors of critical thought. Moreover, like most people who have studied the problem, I am not optimistic that the future will be better.

Yet, there are a lot more talent and wisdom among today's teachers than those who lambast our schools would have us believe. If the talented and wise teachers already there (plus those the ensuing years will add) were to labor mightily in the ways advocated here—doing all they can to extend the scope of the school's influence, to increase the number of students who are introduced to the best our culture has to offer in all domains of human endeavor, and to expand the powers of clear thought and forceful expression in *all* students—the benefit to future generations will be immeasurable. In sum, when dedicated educators and aroused citizens begin to ask what may be done to make our high schools better than they are, they could do a lot worse than to heed a few of the lessons St. Paul's School has to teach.

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The preparation of this essay was supported in part by a grant from the Spencer Foundation.

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ROBERT COLES

On the Nature of Character: Some Preliminary Field Notes

IN THE HARVARD COLLEGE OF THE DECADE after the Second World War, Gordon Allport was a significant figure indeed—interested always in connecting the newly influential social sciences to the ethical and religious concerns of earlier social and psychological scholars: William James, of course, and William McDougall, and farther back, J. S. Mill or John Locke. I still remember a lecture of Allport's in 1950 in which he stressed the distinction between character and personality. He was forever anxious to acknowledge Freud's perceptive, trenchant thrusts into the outer precincts of consciousness, while at the same time remind us what Freud could afford to ignore about himself and certain others: a moral center that was, quite simply, *there*. No amount of psychoanalysis, even an interminable stretch of it, Allport cautioned us—drawing on Freud's givens with respect to human development—can provide a strong conscience to a person who has grown up in such a fashion as to become chronically dishonest, mean-spirited, a liar. "Psychoanalysis can provide insight, can help us overcome inhibitions," we were told, "but it was not meant to be an instrument of 'character building.' " I found recently my old college notes, found that sentence. I had put a big question mark above the phrase "character building," as if to say: What is it, really? I had heard the expression often enough in the Boy Scouts, in Sunday School, and, not least, from my somewhat Puritanical parents. They set great store by virtues they referred to as self-discipline, responsibility, honesty (often described as "the best policy"), and not least, the one my mother most commonly mentioned, "good conduct." Could it be that a social *scientist*, in the middle of the twentieth century, was mentioning such qualities in a college lecture—was, in fact, asking us to consider how they might be evaluated in people, with some accuracy and consistency?[1]

At that time such efforts were still being made, notably by Robert Havighurst and Hilda Taba and their colleagues at the University of Chicago.[2] But as I got nearer and nearer to becoming a doctor, then a pediatrician, then a child psychiatrist, I heard less and less about "character" and more and more about "character disorders"—certain elements of psychopathology that many psychoanalysts today connect with the vicissitudes of what is called "psychosexual development."[3] In his early productive years, before he turned fanciful—if not deranged—Wilhelm Reich placed great emphasis on what he called "character reactions," the particular way each person works out his or her psychodynamic fate. "In the main," he once said, "character proves to be a

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narcissistic defense mechanism."[4] No doubt such a generalization can be helpful; we are brought closer to the subliminal workings of the mind, and to its historic necessities of symbolic expression and self-protection, in the face of turmoil generated from within, never mind the stresses that "life" manages to bring. But at some point, even the most factual-minded or dispassionately "rational" of psychoanalytic observers, anxious to maintain a "value-free" posture, would be tempted to observe that there is more to the assessment of human beings than an analysis (even one "in-depth") of narcissistic defense mechanisms can provide.

Hitler's mechanisms, Stalin's, those of any number of murderers or thieves, surely offered what Reich called a "character armor"—as do, right now, the mechanisms employed by Mother Theresa's unconscious, and that belonging to Dom Helder of Brazil's Recife, or to such among us in America as Robert Penn Warren or Eudora Welty or, until her death recently, Dorothy Day. At some point the issue becomes decidedly moral—or, in today's flat, impoverished language, a "normative matter." If I may call upon Gordon Allport again, "character is personality evaluated," a descriptive notion that may make up, in its everyday usefulness, for whatever is lost so far as "psychodynamic relevance" goes.

How we go about doing that evaluation is a matter of great import. In recent years character has been of little concern for many of us whose interest is mental life, or the social and cultural life of human beings. The very word may suggest a prescientific age; may remind us of pietistic avowals or moralistic banalities many of us have tried to put behind us; may bring up the spectre of a word being used to protect the privileges of the well-born, the powerful—as if what is at issue is etiquette, polish, a certain appearance or manner of talking and carrying oneself. How much fairer, some say, to judge people through their academic performance, or through standardized tests: no risk of subjectivity, not to mention self-serving partiality. Still, it is not only Emerson, in another age, who suggested that "character is higher than intellect," and who observed that "a great soul will be strong to live, as well as strong to think."[5] Walker Percy today reminds us of those "who get all A's and flunk life."[6] And surely, a century that has witnessed learned individuals like Jung and Heidegger embrace Nazism, not to mention any number of intellectuals preach uncritically the virtues of Stalinist totalitarianism, is not going to be completely uninterested in such distinctions as the age-old polarity of knowledge as against wisdom.

In my own working life the question of "character" came up in the early 1960s when my wife and I were getting to know the black children who initiated school desegregation in the South, often against high odds—mob violence, even—and the young men and women who made up the nonviolent sit-in movement. I remember the clinical appraisals, psychological histories, and socioeconomic comments I wrote then. I remember my continuing effort to *characterize* those children, those youths—as if one weighty, academically acceptable adjective after another would, in sum, do the job. Ruby was from a "culturally deprived," a "culturally disadvantaged," family. Tessie's grandmother was illiterate. Lawrence was counterphobic, suffering "deep down" from a mix of anxiety and depression. Martha "projected" a lot. George was prone to "reaction-formations." Jim seemed to have a "character disorder," even

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a "borderline personality." Fred might well become psychotic later on. Meanwhile, these youthful American citizens were walking past grown men and women who were calling them the foulest of names, who were even threatening to kill them—and such hecklers were escaping sociological and psychological scrutiny in the bargain, while any number of judges were ordering "evaluations" by my kind to be done on sit-in students who were violating the (segregationist) laws, and who were thought to be (and eventually declared by doctors to be) "sick" or "delinquent" or "troubled" or "sociopathic" or "psychopathic." A historic crisis had confronted a region politically, and in so doing, had ripped open the political, economic, racial aspects of our manner of judging others—the direct connection between what the Bible calls "principalities and powers," and what in our everyday life is "normal" or "proper" behavior. One day, as I mumbled some statements suffused with the words of psychiatric theory to "explain" a given child's behavior, my wife said, "You are making her sound as if she ought to be on her way to a child guidance clinic, but she is walking into a school building—and no matter the threats, she is holding her head up high, even smiling at her obscene hecklers. Last night she even prayed for them!"

It was my wife's judgment that Ruby Bridges, aged six, was demonstrating to all the world *character*. Even if cognitive psychologists were to declare such a child not old enough to make certain recognitions or distinctions; even if other theorists were to find Ruby unable to do very much moral reasoning or analysis; even if still other social scientists or clinicians were to emphasize her severe "problems"—her imitative habits, her fearful responses, her Oedipal tensions, her moments of blind obedience or terror-struck submission; even if she were to demonstrate to any number of curious observers—armed with questions, tests, stories to be analyzed, crayons to be used on drawing paper—certain handicaps, developmental difficulties, emotional impasses or disorders, cognitive blocks, age-related blind spots; nevertheless, she was managing to face those mobs with a quiet, stoic dignity that impressed her teachers, newspaper reporters, and federal marshals (who escorted her each day to and from school). One of her teachers, as a matter of fact, said that she herself could never submit to such a daily scene—suggesting that moral *behavior* is not necessarily the same thing as a capacity for moral *thinking;* that character may not be something one ascertains through questionnaires or through experiments done on a university campus.

Against such vexing theoretical difficulties (which had become for me a matter of continuing astonishment, if not haunting confusion), a chance to talk again with young people in a variety of school situations was most welcome. My wife and I had spent years visiting a number of Atlanta's high schools, though not George Washington Carver School.[7] We had spent a season visiting a high school north of Chicago, though not Highland Park High School.[8] And we have children in the private schools of New England, though not St. Paul's School. I decided to keep trying to gain some sense of the variations in the moral life of the young by emphasizing that subject in my planned visits to these three schools, in the hope that more and more of what Anna Freud calls "direct observation" (as opposed to eagerly speculative and all too inclusive and unqualified generalizations) will help us to understand where "personality" ends and "character" begins in the mind's life.

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The "methodology" is thoroughly simple—a mere beginning in exploration, but perhaps not an altogether futile way to learn something about certain young people. I asked the principals of the two public high schools and the headmaster of the private school to "select two teachers qualified to judge character"; those teachers would, in turn, select four or so students who, they believe, possess "character" or "high character." When the principals of Highland Park and Carver asked what I meant by such a word, such an expression, I replied simply that I was trying to find out precisely *that*. I told each principal that I wanted to speak with all the students chosen together, rather than separately, and that I wanted to meet also with the two teachers together.

I went to St. Paul's School first. The headmaster had arranged for two teachers to select four students, and we met in a classroom a good distance from the headmaster's office. We were, in a sense, free—no classes, no one to interrupt or keep an eye on what was to be a full morning's discussion. I told the students, two young men and two young women, that I wanted to explore the meaning to them of "character," and we were, with no hesitation, off to a sustained inquiry.

The word was not a strange one for these students; they had heard it used repeatedly, they said, though none had ever really stopped to think about its meaning. Early on one of the young women said, "We talk about 'human nature' or 'personality' or 'identity'; I suppose in the past they talked about 'character.' " Yet these students were quite articulate as they sifted and sorted among themselves and their classmates in search of a definition, a way of looking at a particular subject. In no time a whole school was being morally scrutinized: the "jocks," the "beautiful people," the "social butterflies," the "freaks," the "party people," the "grinds," various teachers, and the "goodly heritage," a phrase many who have gone to St. Paul's have heard again and again.

Much time was spent struggling with the question of arrogance, with the temptation of self-importance and self-centeredness—a personal hazard these four were not loath to acknowledge. They were in a school known as one of the best in America. They were, in different ways, doing well there—one academically; one as a scholar-athlete; one for showing concern and compassion for others, near and afar; one as a person trusted and liked by a wide assortment of classmates. Yet they worried that their success was a temptation to "become stuck-up," as one put it. Self-righteousness and self-consciousness were additional hazards—elements likely to shut a person off, making that person less responsive to other people. Gradually, how one responds to others took on high importance. One of the young men put it this way: "I tend to be a private person. I like to take long walks by myself. At times I don't want company. I want to hold onto my individuality. But I like to be with others, too. I like to be a *friend*. I'd like to think that if someone were in trouble, he'd turn to me, and I'd be there, and I'd put that person's trouble above my needs, including taking a solitary walk!"

Other topics came up frequently: the tension between adjustment to the demands of various cliques and the private values a given individual feels to be important—or put differently, the tension between loyalty to one's friends and loyalty to one's own memories, habits, yearnings; the tension between one's

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competitive side and one's regard for others; and more crudely, the tension between one's wish to win and one's willingness to help others. The word "honesty" was mentioned over and over—an Augustinian examination, done with today's psychological panache: who is "really" honest, and for what "underlying" reasons? Moreover, does it "pay" in this society to be honest all the time? When do honesty and self-effacement turn into "masochism"? When does pride in one's convictions turn into a bullying egotism? If you really do have "a sense of yourself," are you not in danger of being smug, self-serving, all too sure of your own significance? When does popularity reduce one's individuality to the point that one belongs to a herd, has lost a mind of one's own?

Such questions were asked quite earnestly, and always with regard to the matter at hand: the characteristics of character. When pressed by one another (I ended up being, most of the time, a listener), the students offered lists: a person who sticks to a set of principles; a person who can risk unpopularity, yet is commanding enough to gain the respect of others; a person who has the courage to be himself, herself; a person who is open-minded, who plays fair with others, who doesn't lie and cheat and, interestingly enough, deceive himself, herself. These were students who believed such qualities to be only partially present. These were students, in fact, who had a decidedly dialectical turn of mind: "You can try to be a better person, but it's a struggle. You can be humble, and that way, intimidate people. You can *use* humility. It's hard to know what's genuine in people. Sometimes people pretend to be something, but they're really just the opposite. They flip and they flop. I don't like people who are sanctimonious. They lecture others, and people take it, but it's out of fear, or there is guilt, and it's being exploited. Every once in a while, I prefer someone who puts his cards on the table and shows he's a real pain in the neck to these holier-than-thou types. Character doesn't mean being a goody-goody person! If you're that kind of person, there's a lot of meanness, probably, inside you, or competitiveness that you're not letting on about to others. Maybe you don't know about it yourself!"

These were, obviously, what we would now call a psychologically sophisticated breed of youth. Yet, they were (thank God!) not anxious to have all human behavior a matter of psychology or psychopathology—or sociology, either: "There are reasons we end up being one kind of person or another kind of person, but when you actually *become* that person (when you're nice to others most of the time), then that's a true achievement. A lot of people *don't* become nice, and it's no excuse to say you had a bad childhood or you never had the right luck. I think you have to take your troubles and overcome them!" The Puritan spirit lives still in the woods of southern New Hampshire, no matter the references—and they were many—to "adolescence," "identity," Sigmund Freud's ideas, the latest notions of what "motivates" people, what makes us "anxious" or "strung out" or "ambivalent."

More than anything else, these four youths grappled with what used to be commonly called "the meaning of life" in philosophy lectures (before the advent of logical positivism, computers, the libido theory, and a strictly materialist view of life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness). One of the young men said this toward the end of our meeting time: "What matters—don't you think?—is what you *do* with your life. I've tried to be independent, to have my own thoughts,

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but to listen to others. I hope to live comfortably, but I hope I won't be greedy and selfish. I don't know what our responsibilities are—to ourselves and our friends and family and neighbors, and to others in places abroad I'll never even see. Even today, this is a big world. What are we supposed to do? We're lucky to be here at St. Paul's. We have such a good life. What do we owe others? Isn't that 'character'—what you decide to do for others, not just yourself?"

The "great suck of self," Walker Percy calls it in *The Second Coming*—the inevitable pull toward our own thoughts, our own wishes, our navels. Adolescence is not the only period of self-absorption, these youths seemed already to know. For them, one is likely to be neither bad nor good. For them, character was no categorical trait. For them, character is not a possession, but something one searches for: a quality of mind and heart one struggles for, sometimes with a bit more success than at other times. Not one of these four wanted to spell out a definition, set down a compulsory series of attributes, offer a list of candidates. One heard from their mouths expressions of confusion, annoyance, vanity, self-satisfaction, self-criticism, self-doubt, self-assurance. One heard, maybe most of all, tentativeness—a reluctance to speak definitively about an aspect of human behavior one student kept describing as "hard to pin down," but also as "important to consider when you're thinking about someone."

The two teachers I met at St. Paul's School, a middle-aged man who taught math, a young woman who taught English, had met, discussed the subject of "character," and added to one another's notions, so that, in the end, there was a final written statement available:

- The aggregate of distinctive qualities belonging to an individual
- Moral vigor or firmness, especially as acquired through self-discipline
- The ability to respond to a setback
- The ability to form an attachment to ideals of a larger community or organization than oneself, and to exert one's influence for the good of the greater body
- The possession of a sense of humor that allows one to see that there is more to life than living
- The ability to be an *individual* in a crowd of *different* people
- A sense of self that has been found through experience
- The ability to allow others to be individuals, even though they may be different
- The ability to disagree with others without condemning (or losing respect for) the individual one disagrees with
- A sensitivity toward the feelings of others
- An understanding of the wholeness of other people's personalities or character (even when it is different from one's own)

These were two individuals who had thought long and hard about a vexing subject—whom to choose, and why? A very bright person, involved in many activities, able to speak coherently and easily, headed straight for Harvard, as

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against a quiet person who defers to the ideas of others in a classroom, does well, but "not all that well," yet in numerous moments seems to reach out for others, not to save them, or turn them into psychiatric cases, but simply "to do a good turn"? A marvelous athlete who also is a leader in many ways during the course of a school year, as against a hardworking youth who is most often self-effacing, yet managed to stand up once or twice on a matter of ethical principle, no matter the risks and the penalties? And surely a host of alternatives, because, as one teacher put it, "when you judge 'character,' you judge the overall person and compare him, or her, to others, and you do so over time, the school year."

In Highland Park, north of Chicago, a somewhat different arrangement had been made. The principal of this suburban high school had selected two teachers, as I requested, but they had picked four students each—seven girls and one boy, interestingly enough. We met in a room across the hall from the principal's office. Twice he asked how we were doing, offered water, tea, coffee—in general, showed a distinct, active interest in our discussions. He himself had thought about the word "character," and as with so many of us, found it a bit puzzling and elusive. So did the students I spent a winter morning with. Several of them said that character had a lot to do with personality; in fact, declared "a good personality" or a "well-rounded person" to be equivalent descriptions to "good character" or "high character." Two young women dissented, however: "Character has to do with honesty. You can be popular, and have a shrink's seal of approval, but not have character!"

We fairly quickly got into a discussion of ethnic and racial tensions—in the school, in our society as a whole. At St. Paul's the cliques were enumerated, as if they threatened individuality, hence character, through the requirements of social cohesion; at Highland Park High School the dominant social divisions, at least for these students, had to do with class and race: Italians and Jews, "working people" and "wealthier people," blacks and whites.

I was given some outspoken lessons in how one's family life affects one's situation in school, and not least, one's character: "It all depends on who you are! Some kids want to go to an Ivy League school; that's all that's on their minds. They put up a good front, to show they have 'character'; they join clubs, and have all these hobbies and interests, so as to impress the teachers and the people who read college applications. Some kids have to work while going to school. They try to get a good deal, a job that pays well. They're making contacts even now for later on. It's built into their 'character' that the world is tough, and you have to know people to get ahead. A lot of the black kids are here because there's a military base in the school district. They come and then they go. It's hard to figure them out. It's in their 'character' to stay away from us whites. There's a lot of tension among us whites. Go into the johns, and you'll see a lot of writing! [I went, and I saw the ethnic slurs.] But a lot of the time we get along pretty well. We've got brainy ones here, headed for college since they were born, and don't get in their way, or else! We've got kids who will work in a store or a factory, and not be ashamed. They see the world different. They take different courses. They have their own code."

The speaker is a wry, outspoken, somewhat detached young woman, bound for college, but "not a fancy one." She is neither Italian nor Jewish, but Anglo-Irish. She had made a certain virtue out of marginality, and the others in the

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room seemed a bit deferential: "She isn't pushed around by anyone. She's her own person. She can mingle with anyone. She doesn't put on airs with anyone." The associations moved relentlessly from social situation to moral conduct—not the first time, or the last, such a progression would be made for me in the course of this study. "You have to know where the person is coming from," I was told several times. Explain! "Well, if you've got a lot going for you, then you can be more relaxed. True, you can be a tightwad and be rich; but it's easier to be generous if you've got a lot behind you!" On the other hand, one student insisted, "there's still room for being poor and good in this world!" She persisted: "I know some kids, right in this school, and they're not here now, they weren't chosen to be here, and they're from pretty poor families, compared to others; their fathers just get by, make a living. And they would give you the shirt off their backs, those kids: that's character. And they wouldn't go talking about what they've done, bragging, and showing off—*that's* character! Some people, they know how to play up to the teachers, and they get a big reputation, but what's the *truth* about them? What are they like when no one is looking, and what are they like when no one is listening?"

We touched many bases. Class and character. Egotism and character. Psychology and character. Smartness and character. Motivation and character. Caring and character. Manners and character. To be stuck-up. To be considerate. To be a help when a person needs help—a flat tire, a car ride, a pencil or piece of paper, a loan of money, a sympathetic ear. To take risks, extend oneself to others, brave social pressures. Grade-mongers. Leaders and followers. Hypocrites. People who have one or another veneer. The "way-down-deep truth" of a person. A final test of character: sickness, financial straits, a disaster. Character and mental health.

Part of *Ordinary People* had been made in Highland Park. The students had watched the filming, and they wondered: If one is hurt, bewildered, "seeing a shrink," can one have the "mental peace" to demonstrate character? Consumerism, selfishness—can one defy them, develop "an ability not to be absorbed with objects." And at some interesting and suggestive length: literature as a means of understanding character, as in *To Kill A Mockingbird* (Atticus had character, he was open-minded, stood up for what he believed, no matter the risks and costs, and so was a "moral man"); or as in *Macbeth* (Lady Macbeth was a "bad person," a "bad character"). And politics: Lincoln and Eisenhower and Truman had character; Johnson lacked it, as do Nixon and Carter. "All politicians probably lie," one student observed, "and maybe all people do, but some just keep on lying, and you can't trust them, and you don't like them, and they're just no damn good, and you can tell, after awhile, even if they tell you they pray every other minute! The truth about a person's character eventually comes out, *eventually*."

Such faith was not universally shared. There was much talk of appearance as against reality: the way people present themselves to others, as opposed to some inner truth about each of us. In contrast to the students at St. Paul's School, these students were distinctly more interested in the relationship between a person's social, economic, ethnic, or racial background—a person's circumstances—and that person's behavior, hence character. And it did come down to that, they all agreed at the end: "You are the way you act—in the long

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run." What did that qualification mean? Well, it goes like this: "Some people can put on an act. But if you keep your wits, and keep an eye on them, you find out the truth about them. If they're good people, kind to others, not just wrapped up in themselves, you'll find it out. If they're putting on a production, you'll find that out." No one, in that regard, seemed to have any doubts about his or her ultimate psychological acuity—or about the long-run dramatic capacities of one or another individual.

There was, as we were ending, a spirited, occasionally tense discussion of tests, grades, the criteria used by colleges and graduate schools to evaluate people. "I know kids who get all A's, and would murder their parents, their brothers and sisters, if they stood in their way," one youth offered. Yes, but there's plenty of nastiness to go around, others said, even among those who do poorly in school. What *should* various committees of admission do? How *does* one make a fairly accurate moral judgment about a person? Numbers may not tell enough. Multiple choice questions may not do justice to life's strangeness—the ironies and ambiguities, the complexities and inconsistencies and contradictions we all struggle with, though some with more decency and integrity and generosity of spirit than others. But how do we arrive at an estimate of a person's essential kindness with respect to others—in the face of thousands of importunate applicants, each putting on the very best face possible? Don't interviews have *their* hazards, the unpredictable variations of mood and temperament, the nuances of subjectivity which can, alas, of a sudden, amount to outright prejudice? We ended on an eclectic note—the desirability of taking a lot into consideration when accepting people for a job, a place in a college, and yes, when judging that elusive concept "character." The last person to leave the room, the young woman who spoke least, said that she thought "character meant being kind and good, even when there was no one to reward you for being kind and good."

These were students acutely aware of the divisions in this society—as Tillie Olsen put it in her story *O Yes*, the ways we "sort." The two Highland Park High School teachers were similarly sensitive to issues of "class and caste," as the splits among us have sometimes been described. Actually, the teachers were themselves a bit split. The assistant principal, a man, is quite in touch with the more academic students of the school; whereas the woman teacher is very much involved with those students who are working at jobs while trying to get through Highland Park—and who are headed, mostly, for what many social scientists would call "service jobs," or membership in the "working class," or the "lower-middle to middle-middle-class," and on and on. The two did not argue, however; in fact, they largely echoed the sentiments of their chosen students: "Grades aren't the whole story, by any means"; and very emphatically, "Character has something to do with moral life."

Both teachers worried about class—expressed concern, for instance, that "mere etiquette" can deceive, or insisted that human scoundrels, like wolves, find sheepskins ("social veneer") aplenty to wear. I heard practically nothing about class-connected deceit at St. Paul's, a lot about it at Highland Park—and character seemed to require, everyone agreed, an impressive absence of such a tendency. Moreover, psychiatry and psychoanalysis were even more prominently mentioned than at St. Paul's—a way of getting to the "deeper truth"

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about people, hence to a judgment of their character. (Fallout from *Ordinary People?*) As already mentioned, disturbed people were described as less likely to show high character. When I mentioned Gandhi's personal eccentricities, if not moments of cruelty, vanity, thoughtlessness, the students were ready, all too ready, to take the clue, the hint, and write him off as sick. When I reminded them that he was, yet, a rather impressive moral leader, the students worried about the burdens placed on his family, and about his own psychiatric ones.

If I had a little trouble persuading this group of students and their teachers that, neurosis or no neurosis, a person's moral motives can affect his or her character, they had no trouble letting me know that a neighborhood, a level of income, the possession of a given nationality, can all affect a person's character. The teachers especially emphasized the distinction between the quietly considerate person, as against the demonstrative, if not flamboyant, doer of public good deeds, a performer of sorts. "Some students want to get A in character, too," one teacher said, as we broke off, a reminder that not only can life be unfair, as one American president took pains to remind us, but virtue can be unfairly perceived—when, in truth, sins are being shrewdly masked. As Flannery O'Connor observed, through the comic irony of a title to one of her stories, a good man is hard to find—and maybe, when the pressures are high, almost impossible to take for granted.

At George Washington Carver High School, in Atlanta, Georgia, I had quite another discussion, with the principal ready to point out the extreme hazards to what he called "character formation" well before I saw (in a room that belonged, really, to his office suite) the four children (two boys and two girls) and two teachers (both women, one who teaches math, the other, biology). "There is a problem with drugs," he explained. "There is a problem with poverty, with terrible poverty, with welfare homes, with absent fathers, with unemployment all over the place." He gave me a lively lecture on the school's history—once a "dumping ground for school failures," now a "place of hope," much connected to businesses that offer promising black youths a great variety of jobs, a chance "to enter the mainstream," in the principal's words. In time I was able to begin talking with the four selected youths, though not before being told emphatically: "Character is something you have to build, right here in this school, every day. You have to lay down the law, and see that it's enforced. Character means discipline and hard work and looking to the future and getting there!" Of the three school leaders, Carver's principal was the only one to volunteer (or hazard) such an explication.

The students were not averse to this line of reasoning. These were young people who were determined to find jobs, determined to be hard workers, strong parents—and not reluctant to explain why such a commitment was connected to a definition, in their minds, of the word "character": "A lot of us, even here, with the principal and the teachers bearing down every minute on us, have trouble reading and writing. We're not going to college, most of us. We're going to try to get a job and hold onto it! It takes character, I think, to do that—not take the easy way out and drink or use drugs or say the white man is on our backs, so what the devil can we do! To me, character is being stubborn. It's staying in there, it's getting out of a hole, and breathing the fresh air, and not falling down anymore."

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My wife and I spent three years in Atlanta, talking with youths such as these—young black men and women trying, in the face of adversity, to forge a better life for themselves. These were more outspoken and self-assured individuals than the ones we got to know in the early 1960s. They were quick to describe themselves as "job-hungry" and as full of determination, willfulness, hopeful anticipation. They were not, though, uninterested in some of the refinements of psychology I had heard discussed in Illinois and New Hampshire: "There's success and success. It's not only getting there, it's how you get there. If you have character, that means you keep trying, no matter how hard it is, and you don't lose your soul while you're doing that. You have to say to yourself, 'I'll go so far and no farther.' You have to draw the line, and if you do, and you can hold to it, you've got character." Nods all around, followed by smiles of recognition as the temptations get mentioned: white devils and black devils who offer serious distractions in the form of drugs and booze, bribes and payoffs, an assortment of "tricks." These are street-smart kids, and they have lots of savvy about Atlanta politics, Atlanta vice, Atlanta hypocrisy, black and white alike. Their moralism and self-conscious, urgently stated rectitude is hard earned, if (they seem to know) not entirely invulnerable.

One pushes the word "character," gets responses connected to hardship, ambition, the requirements of people living on the edge, hence with little interest in metaphysical or metapsychological speculation. Character? Why, J. R. in *Dallas* lacks it, utterly; Dr. King had it, that's for sure. Character? A lot of big shots may seem to have it, but too bad more people don't know who is scratching whose back. On the other hand, there's a woman who works in a Howard Johnson's motel, and she lost her husband from cancer, and she has five kids, and she has two of them out of high school and in good jobs, and the other three are headed that way, and she doesn't stand for any foolishness, *none*, and she takes those kids to church every Sunday, and they pray hard and long, and she has character, in case anyone wants to know! The church—at long last it comes up in a talk about character! Not in a school that bears the name of St. Paul, no less; and not in a school where Catholics and Jews seem ready to square off at each other all day, every day; but in Carver, you bet. Each of these four high-school-age Americans (no fools about getting high or about the demands of the flesh or about the various shortcuts people take) goes to church on Sundays, and if there is reluctance sometimes (the joy of a late sleep), there is, after all, no real choice: "We have to go. Our mother says we have to go, and once we're there, I don't half mind! I like it there. I'll make my kids go, too."

Much talk of "uplift." Much reference to "building" oneself into "a stronger person," getting "on the map." How? There are auto repair shops. There are radio and TV repair shops. There are cosmetology shops. There are dry-cleaning places. There are tailoring and sewing and shoe repair places. There is a big airport, and people work there—on engines if they are on top, otherwise as cleaning people or doing errands, or driving buses and taxis, "lots of things." (No angst about capitalism at Carver!) If you get one of those jobs, and you hold onto it; if you get yourself a girlfriend or a boyfriend, and they become a wife or a husband, and you become a father or a mother, and you "stay with it," and be good to your family, earn them a living, take care of them; if you remain loyal to your church, and pray to God when you're weak; if you don't forget your people, and try to lend a hand to the ones who didn't make it, who stumbled

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and fell and are hurt and sad and wondering what the point of it all is, and maybe have done wrong, done it too many times—if all that is "inscribed on your soul," then, by God, you have character, and it's important to say "by God," because it's "His grace that does things."

"I'm not as small after church as I am before church," one of these four told me—a lifeline that rescues at least one American, temporarily, from "the culture of narcissism." As for "good manners," they aren't superficial at all; they tell of something very deep down, no matter what so-called depth psychologists have to say, not to mention those who make of them religious figures: "You can tell a person by how he speaks to you. If he's respectful, then he's good; if he gives you the shoulder, then he's bad. I don't care if someone has a lot of bad in him. If he keeps it a secret from the whole world, then he's way out front. If he shows his bad self to everyone, he's putting it on us, man, and it's hard enough without that—another hassle to deal with. My grandmother tells us: 'Keep your mouth shut if there's no good to come out of it. Keep your mischief to yourself. We've all got it—but some of us don't show it off.' She's right; she has character."

Some other virtues that bespeak character: punctuality; how you carry yourself; an ability to laugh, when there's a good excuse for crying or shouting or shaking your fists; how you speak—with clear enunciation of words, so that others may hear you; self-respect, as measured by neatness and choice of clothes, as well as respect for others, as measured by a smile, a please, a thank you; obedience—to your elders, to the law, to your own self-evident ideas of what is right and wrong. "We all stray," said one of the young women, "but if we try hard not to keep repeating ourselves, and if we're not afraid to learn from our mistakes, and if we're willing to work hard, and sacrifice, then we have character." Pieties, all those remarks, the skeptical, psychoanalyzed liberal Yankee muses—fighting off embarrassment, wonder, a touch of awe, and emotional memories of other youths in other Atlanta spots, youths similarly hard-pressed, who managed to "overcome," and youths similarly unwilling to be self-pitying in the face of the severe inequities of this life.

The two teachers—my wife got to know so many very much like these two: tough-minded, outspoken, a touch contemptuous of anyone who wants to offer sympathy, never mind condolences. They are demanding, insistent, forceful women: "Let these kids work hard, and better themselves, and be good members of their families, and they'll show character; that's how, the only way!" And candidly, bluntly, unapologetically: "We chose the best we have to talk with you. We chose the smart ones, the ones who could talk with you and get themselves across. We have others here who would tax your patience and understanding. Maybe they have 'character,' too. I don't think character is the property of the lucky and the smart and the successful, no sir. But to me, character means an active person, who is ready to face the world, and make a mark on it. That's why I chose these kids. They're ready, they're ready to turn their backs on all their troubles, our troubles, and be good—be full of action. 'Never be lazy,' I tell my kids at home, and here in school. There's that expression: going to meet 'the man.' Well, I say we can become 'the man' ourselves. We can take control of our own lives, be our own masters. It may be preachy of me to talk like this, but we've got to pep-talk ourselves, and then *get*

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on with it! I pray to God—we need His help badly—that more and more of these kids at Carver *will* get on with it."

On the way home, back North again, I took out my books and papers: notes to write, ideas to savor, comparisons to make. There it was, the wonderful message that Kierkegaard gave us over a century ago, the message I often wish a few of us theorists of moral development would keep in constant mind: "Mortality is character, character is that which is engraved *(χαράσσω);* but the sand and the sea have no character and neither has abstract intelligence, for character is really inwardness. Immorality, as energy, is also character; but to be neither moral nor immoral is merely ambiguous, and ambiguity enters into life when the qualitative distinctions are weakened by a gnawing reflection."[9]

He was a great one for leaps, that nineteenth century version of the melancholy (if spiritedly so) Dane. I wondered on my flight home whether he might somewhere in this universe be smiling, be assenting to the message, the slightly hectoring statement delivered by that mathematics teacher, and later by her tough, occasionally *very* tough, principal, who told me that he had "a lot of bad characters" to deal with, but damned if he couldn't "take them on," "turn them around," "convert their wasted energy into useful energy." It all sounded slightly like the noise of strained braggadocio: I'll talk big, and hope for the best. It all sounded exaggerated, romantic—like Kierkegaard. It all sounded pretty good, though, to those four young people and two of their teachers.

References

[1]A good summary of Allport's sensitive moral and psychological writing is found in *Personality: A Psychological Interpretation* (Holt: New York, 1937).

[2]See R. J. Havighurst and H. Taba, *Adolescent Character and Personality* (Wiley: New York, 1949). Also, more recently, R. Havighurst and R. Peck, *The Psychology of Character Development* (Wiley: New York, 1960).

[3]See *Disorders of Character*, by Joseph Michaels (Thomas: Springfield, Illinois, 1955), for a suggestive discussion, with a first-rate bibliography.

[4]Wilhelm Reich, *Character Analysis*, 3d ed. (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1972), p. 169.

[5]In his well-known oration, "The American Scholar," delivered before Harvard's Phi Beta Kappa Society on August 31, 1837.

[6]Walker Percy, *The Second Coming* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1980). See also his wonderful collection of essays, which take up the same theme again and again, *The Message in the Bottle* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1975).

[7]See my *Children of Crisis: A Study of Courage and Fear*, vol. 1 (Boston: Atlantic-Little, Brown, 1967).

[8]See the section, "Schools" in volume 3 of *Children of Crisis: The South Goes North* (Boston: Atlantic-Little, Brown, 1967).

[9]Søren Kierkegaard, *The Present Age*, translated by Alexander Dru (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 43.

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ALONZO A. CRIM

A Community of Believers

> A child is a person who is going to carry on what you have started. He is going to sit where you are sitting, and when you are gone, attend to those things which you think are important. . . . The fate of humanity is in his hands.
>
> —Abraham Lincoln

In August 1980, with the approval of the Atlanta Board of Education, I was able to inform everyone in the city of Atlanta that our schoolchildren would achieve at the national norm level in literacy skills by 1985, and that 20 percent of that gain would be realized during the 1980-81 school year. Letters announcing this goal were sent to every student, parent, and staff member. They were told that the job could be done in Atlanta, but it would not be easy, and the school system had to have their help. We informed them that we would hold meetings throughout the city to discuss how we could become partners in bringing our first-year goal as well as our five-year goal to fruition.

When I was appointed superintendent in 1973, the Atlanta public schools had been engaged in desegregation litigation for twenty-five years. The 1973 settlement between the plaintiffs and the Board of Education called for parity by race in administrative positions, with the superintendent position to be filled by a black.

I eagerly accepted the Board of Education's offer to come to Atlanta for several reasons:

1. I was impressed by the sincerity of the Board of Education to move on desegregation as much as possible and to improve educational opportunities for students. It was easy for me to discern that the Board had great concern for children. I was looking for a caring Board I could work with for at least ten years. My previous four years in Compton, California, had indicated to me that not enough could be accomplished in one term as superintendent in a relatively large urban community.
2. My interviews with members of the community, representatives of government, and business personnel led me to believe that they had a deep interest in the school system. They were ready to help.

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3. Staff members were open to direction despite the upset caused by the mass reassignments of staff for the purpose of desegregation.
4. Compared to Compton with its few business and cultural resources, Atlanta had abundant resources. Of *Fortune*'s top 500 businesses, 499 had offices in Atlanta, and twenty-eight colleges and universities were located in Atlanta at that time.

Atlanta was the city where I wanted to give leadership to a school system that would move poor children—in particular, black children—to achievement levels equal or better than national averages. I was challenged very early on in 1973 by persons who were prominent in the civil rights movement as to how I would exercise that leadership.

Congressman Andrew Young invited me to a three-day meeting with their civil rights leaders and lawyers. After the first day I found that Atlanta was the desegregation case that had their attention. I was virtually on the witness stand, expected to answer questions on matters that took place before my arrival in Atlanta, and being pushed to predict my future actions in Atlanta. I disappointed them when I told them I saw little chance for a metropolitan school organization in Atlanta in the immediate future. Further, I was uncertain if a supersized school system could give poor and black children the quality programs they needed. My experience caused me to believe that anonymity was a major factor for the low achievement of poor and minority students. I was going to attempt to build a system where students would know that people cared about them and would help them to achieve. To say the least, my fellow conferees were cynical about my intentions.

In my search of more than twenty-five years for creating the conditions that best promote the achievement of poor and minority students, I have found that you must build commitment for learning in students. That commitment does not come easily to persons who see few persons around them succeeding. My strategy for building commitment in students has four parts:

1. Students must feel that people who are important to them must believe in the goal. This means that school staff must develop a community of believers that includes peers, parents, educators at all levels, business persons, members of the clergy, and citizens-at-large. The public perception must be one of seeing students as winners rather than losers. Business persons in Georgia were so elated in 1980 over Herschel Walker's performance on the University of Georgia's national championship team that they wanted to form an insurance agency for him. They did not wish to lose this outstanding freshman to the professional teams. Everyone likes a winner.
2. Students must be shown evidence that they are doing something worthwhile. Students must be helped to appreciate the rise in achievement. They must see themselves and others securing jobs and college placements. We cannot expect students who see little success about them to "hit the line everytime with power," like Herschel Walker, unless they receive some immediate gains as well as promises of future gains.

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3. Students must be given opportunities to express their views on the goals we set for them. Students mature physically earlier, but adult job opportunities come later in their lives compared to students of the fifties and sixties. This condition requires students to talk with adults rather than turning only to their peers for understanding. Adults need to know how students feel about the world we give them and the rules we establish for running the world.
4. Students must be challenged to improve their own performances. There can be no one model of challenge for youth that will be imposed from the top, but thousands of conscious, decentralized experiments devised by caring adults that will attempt to drive students on.

Despite the fact that Atlanta's desegregation order was relatively modest in requirements, it took two years to fully implement. In 1975 the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals declared the Atlanta public schools a unitary school system. Everyone in the system felt a sense of relief. They assumed they could now turn their attention from the courts to the low student achievement.

Prior to 1975 test scores in the Atlanta public schools had never been publicly reported. Despite the absence of any reports on scores, the school system was perceived by many citizens as a low-achieving school system, primarily because of the dramatic racial change in the student population, from 60 percent white in the late 1950s to more than 80 percent black by 1973. The low standardized achievement scores reported confirmed the opinion of many black and white citizens that the public schools were bad.

During the 1974-75 school year, school staff conducted town meetings throughout Atlanta to hear the public views of the schools and to find out what the public felt should be priority school concerns. More than ten thousand citizens demonstrated that they cared by attending those meetings. They indicated that the Atlanta public schools should establish four priorities:

1. Improve significantly the reading, writing, speaking, listening, and computational skills of students
2. Assist students in handling their futures—that is, job placement
3. Allocate the system's resources to students equitably
4. Improve communications between school staff and the public, between school staff and students, and between school staff members

The 1975-76 school year was a start-up year. Each school staff developed a local plan of improvement. The plans were compiled in the four school areas and at the central office. Much hard work of staff resulted in no systemwide gains in achievement scores, but there was no systemwide loss. What the 1975-76 testing program in all grades did provide was data on all students. School system research staff used the data to report to students, parents, and staff on successes and failures of individual students, common errors of students by classrooms, and individual profiles.

A new feature was added to the planning activity in the 1976-77 school year. A review committee composed of the system's finest reading specialists, regardless of work assignment, was organized in each of the four areas. These

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review committees advised local school staffs on their plans prior to submission to area superintendents for approval.

The Review Committees assisted local school staffs in examining their plans against test data and instructional skills given in the curriculum guides. Classroom plans were checked for appropriateness with classroom and school profiles. Review committees met with local school staffs every three months to review progress and suggest modifications to the plans if needed. Test scores improved systemwide by 10 percent in 1976-77. A similar improvement was obtained in 1977-78.

Parents and students were informed of test data through information sessions. In 1977-78, 68 percent of parents came to school for those sessions. Reports were mailed to other parents. Presentations on tests were made on several public broadcasting programs, particularly WETV-Channel 30. Paid newspaper advertisements were used to inform citizens on progress. Over the several years that the program has been in effect the news media have given the improvement greater coverage.

Present Status of Achievement

Although the academic achievement scores for Atlanta public school students are below the national norms in reading and math, system achievement scores have shown continuous improvement over the period 1976-79 for elementary students (Tables 1 and 2). A similar trend of improvement is also

Table 1. Grade Equivalent in Reading, 1976-79, ITBS*

	1976	1977	1978	1979
1	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.2
2	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.6
3	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.3
4	3.5	3.7	3.8	3.8
5	4.1	4.3	4.4	4.6
6	4.5	4.7	4.8	5.0
7	5.1	5.3	5.4	5.5

*Iowa Test of Basic Skills

Table 2. Grade Equivalent in Math, 1976-79, ITBS

	1976	1977	1978	1979
1	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9
2	2.4	2.6	2.7	2.7
3	3.0	3.2	3.2	3.3
4	3.6	3.8	3.8	3.9
5	4.2	4.4	4.5	4.6
6	4.6	4.8	5.0	5.1
7	5.2	5.4	5.6	5.7

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evident at the high-school level (Tables 3 and 4). It is significant to note that these improvements parallel the emphasis placed on the school system's goals of reading and mathematics.

The implication here is that, to some extent, the various programs and strategies employed have been effective in improving the achievement levels of the Atlanta public schools students. But the rate of progress has been modest. The present rate of improvement by grade level has been about one month of achievement gain per year. At this rate, a total of four years would be required for Atlanta students to equal the national norm in reading at the third-grade level. Thus our timetable of reaching the national norm by 1985 is realistic.

Table 3. TAP Composition Scores, 1975-78

	1975		1976		1977		1978	
	SS[1]	GE[2]	SS	GE	SS	GE	SS	GE
Atlanta public school system	38.9	7.6	40.1	8.0	40.2	8.0	40.5	8.1
National norm	50.0	11.1	50.0	11.1	50.0	11.1	50.0	11.1

[1]Standard score
[2]Grade equivalent

Table 4. TAP Reading Scores, 1975-78

	1975		1976		1977		1978	
	SS	GE	SS	GE	SS	GE	SS	GE
Atlanta public school system	39.3	8.1	39.9	8.3	39.7	8.2	40.3	8.4
National norm	50.0	11.1	50.0	11.1	50.0	11.1	50.0	11.1

At the high-school level, Atlanta public schools students, on the average, scored below the national norms on the Tests of Academic Progress (TAP) in composition, reading, and mathematics. However, high-school students, as did students in grades one through seven, have shown continuous improvement over the period 1975-78 in these areas (Tables 3, 4, and 5).

Table 5. TAP Mathematics Scores, 1975-78

	1975		1976		1977		1978	
	SS	GE	SS	GE	SS	GE	SS	GE
Atlanta public school system	40.8	7.9	40.9	8.0	40.8	7.9	41.6	8.1
National norm	50.0	11.1	50.0	11.1	50.0	11.1	50.0	11.1

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State Criterion-Referenced tests for tenth-grade students in communications and mathematics in part substantiate the longitudinal improvement of Atlanta students in basic reading as well as other subareas of communication skills (Tables 6 and 7).

Table 6. Georgia Criterion-Referenced Tests, Percent of Tenth-Grade Students Achieving Objectives in Communication Skills

	Reading and Listening Comprehension Skills	Basic Reading	Writing Skills
1978	52	69	63
1979	52	71	64

Table 7. Georgia Criterion-Referenced Tests, Percent of Tenth-Grade Students Achieving Objectives in Mathematics Skills

	Number System	Personal Finances	Measurement	Problem-Solving
1978	44	31	26	31
1979	43	31	26	42

My three decades of educational experiences have always been in urban communities. My students have usually been poor and predominantly black, and without exception have always achieved below national norms in literacy skills. Atlanta public schools' 90 percent black student population was second only to Washington among large cities. Of the 126 schools in the system, 123 qualified as Title I schools. Atlanta harbors the poor and the black.

Still, the Atlanta public schools and other systems like it have always produced students such as Dr. Martin L. King, Jr., Vernon Jordan, Mayor Maynard Jackson, and Julian Bond. What we have set out to do in the Atlanta public schools is to provide educational success for most students rather than a few.

In summary, while Atlanta public school students, in general, score below the national norms, K-12, in the basic skills of reading and math, TAP's and Criterion-Referenced tests show that our students have been making continuous academic progress over the past three years. The rate of progress has been small, however. In effect, the analysis of the test data relative to achievement suggests that the school system has made significant progress in the identification and utilization of programs, strategies, and resources necessary for the overall improvement of the academic achievement of students. What remained to be done in 1980 was to reexamine the degree to which various programs, strategies, and allocation of resources impact the achievement of Atlanta public schools students, the end result of this reexamination being the acceleration of the degree of academic progress of students in the areas of reading and math.

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A staff committee composed of top staff was appointed to begin organizing a systemwide planning effort that would drive students on to the 1985 goal. The timetable for the plan included identifying major issues that should be taken to the public at the several town meetings planned for October, November, and December. The completion date for the plan was determined to be July 1981.

Little mention of the progress of the planning activity will be made in this paper except as it relates to achieving the 20 percent gain established for the 1980-81 school year. The focus will be on what transformations took place in several significant areas that prepare the school system for the bold goal of reaching the national norm by 1985.

School Administration

In my more than eighteen years of experience as an administrator, I have had seven administrative assignments, including three principalships and two superintendencies. With the exception of one principalship, when I opened a school and selected all staff members—and was thereby granted the leadership role from the first day—I can remember the occasion at each assignment when staff members fully accorded me the leadership role.

It took almost two years to earn the leadership role in the Atlanta public schools. Before that time I was "that new guy from that California School District." I employed several strategies in my attempts to earn the leadership role. I held weekly meetings with the top executives. In the meetings I made certain that I would enunciate the instructional objectives over and over again. I made certain that our top staff were aware that my first concern was student achievement. It has been an awesome revelation to me that staff tend to give emphasis to those things I talk about most. I then had to assure that quality attention was given to the outcomes of instruction. To accomplish this I shifted much of the time of the research and evaluation from proposal development to working directly with local school staffs. Each research assistant is assigned to several schools. The research assistant's job is to provide the most useful information possible on individual pupils, groups of pupils, and the entire school community. Test data are made understandable to staff and community members. The research assistant participates with the local school staff in developing an appropriate instructional plan for his or her school(s). Since all these materials are made available to executive staff, we enter into a continuing dialogue on the appropriateness of local school and area planning.

Over the years I have met with each department and work unit in the school system to talk to them about how they contribute to student outcomes. These meetings, however, are infrequent. I have regular meetings with principals. We have divided the elementary principals into four groups of about twenty each. We meet at a school at 1:00 P.M. and have lunch and converse together. I do not bring a structured agenda to these meetings; I am therefore able to hear their concerns and they listen to mine. These meetings have been most beneficial in that I am able to communicate directly and regularly my expectancies. They enjoy doing the same. I have a better understanding and appreciation of what they can and cannot do because of these meetings.

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About twice a year we convene administrative congress meetings. All persons in promotional positions are members of the administrative congress. At congress meetings we usually talk about systemwide objectives and personnel matters such as health and welfare benefits. This organization was most useful during our one-day strike in 1975. It reviewed and reacted to all demands from the employee organizations. It helped the Board of Education, administration, and executive staff to realize what could really be implemented at the several work sites.

For more than ten years the Atlanta public schools have been organized on an area basis, with twenty or more schools assigned to an area headed by an area superintendent. The area superintendent is responsible for evaluating the principals and for securing training for principals when needed.

A systemwide program, the Administrative University, provides principal training in management functions, supervision, managing grievances, and leadership behavior. All these topics are related to the 1985 goals. The Administrative University is designed to ensure that each principal is trained to carry out those things that the school system expects of him or her. For example, the State Department of Education has installed a new supervision program for first-year teachers. All principals were given training in the program and required to demonstrate competency.

The school administration staff members directly concerned with the instructional program are my first reference group. They have direct impact on achievement of both faculty and staff. It is the first group that must be won in creating a community of believers.

The Atlanta public school administrators have come to believe, and it is showing up in test results, student and faculty attendance, lower drop-out rates, and more students going on to postsecondary institutions. To illustrate this, I quote Dr. Ernest Boyer's comments on the impressions received by a study group from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, during a visit to five Atlanta high schools in March 1981:

> Based on our brief visit, I think all the members of the panel felt we saw a school system that was healthy and where academic priorities were clearly understood and where progress was being made.
>
> Secondly, we were struck by a generally orderly, disciplined climate. This is contrary to some of the conventional wisdom that says the high schools are generally chaotic places. This is not true in Atlanta.
>
> In my experience, schools are adrift because their academic goals are unclear. Certainly, there are problems [in the Atlanta Public Schools], but they are enormously benefited by the common agreement on what they're [trying to do]. I did sense that the community of Atlanta still believes that a good school system is important to the community.

The Teacher

I have always felt that almost all teachers want to teach their students well and would if they knew how. Teachers could better hide their lack of know-how when the curriculum was less complex and even educated people did not have to know so much. Today we are insisting in Atlanta and elsewhere that all the children be educated. We ask more of teachers than ever before. In 1979-80

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the drop-out rate in Atlanta public schools was 5.9 percent. The systemwide average daily attendance was more than 93 percent. Students are staying in school, and the community expects them to learn.

The school system has used staff development as a vehicle for improving the performances of teachers. Through staff development, teachers have been supported to try new methods, determine the effectiveness of their strategies, plan with others, and even invent new techniques for working with students. Some significant support systems that have been employed in the school system are described briefly below:

Reading/Math Center—The Atlanta Public Schools Reading Center has been in operation for seven years. High, middle, and elementary schoolteachers spend from three days to one week at the center receiving individualized in-service training in the teaching of reading. Recent data from the Research and Evaluation Division indicate that the students of teachers who have participated in the Reading Center program score better on reading tests than students of teachers who have not had the Reading Center training. In short, the Reading Center is vital in the teacher preparation process.

In 1980-81 the Reading Center became the Reading and Mathematics Center. The expanded Center concept will provide in-depth in-service training in the area of mathematics as well as in the area of reading.

Comprehensive Early Assessment Program (CEAP)—CEAP is designed to provide complete documentation on entry-level assessment characteristics of all primary students. The early assessment program results enable the teacher to prepare experiences that are consistent with the students' needs. CEAP objectives are entry-level assessment, follow-up rescreening and further diagnosis, parental involvement, and appropriate placement. The early assessment and follow-up procedures impact achievement at the elementary level in the areas of students' attitudes, discipline, and learning.

Elementary Curriculum Development (ECD)—This implementation of the ECD Program began during the 1972-73 school year. At that time ten elementary schools comprised the entire pilot group. Ten additional schools were added during the 1973-74 school year, and the remaining elementary schools were added on an incremental basis.

The evaluation of the initial ten schools focused on teacher change—attendance and assessing individual instruction; and pupil change—attendance, gain scores on ITBS (Iowa Test of Basic Skills), and self-concept. The initial evaluation of ECD indicated that, when implemented properly, the ECD model was effective in changing, in a positive direction, teacher attendance and individualization, pupil attendance, achievement, and self-concept. In short, ECD has been a successful program for Atlanta's elementary schools.

Alternative Education Program—The Atlanta public school system at present offers nine alternative education programs. These programs range from Schools without Walls—a joint venture between the Chamber of Commerce and the Atlanta public schools, to Cities in Schools—a program designed to assist dropouts and potential dropouts in acquiring a high-school diploma. Specifically, the Alternative Education Programs provide four distinct services to

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students: (1) Career Exploration, (2) Community Services, (3) Independent Studies and (4) special programs for turned-off, or disaffected, students.

Alternative Education Programs impact students, curriculum, and instruction. Classroom teachers do not always support able students spending time in alternative programs, but they are usually supportive of students who achieve poorly.

Compensatory Education (Title I)—Compensatory Education Programs are designed to provide supplemental instructional activities for students who perform below their expected levels in reading, math, and communication skills. Title I has made staff development legitimate. Most citizens accept that it is important to provide training for staff. The Atlanta public schools program includes individualized instruction via programmed materials and in-service workshops for teachers and teacher aides. Title I includes components that are designed to directly impact students, teachers, curriculum and instruction, and community involvement.

Systemwide Objective Plan—The Systemwide Objective Plan is basically an instructional planning and management process, focusing on the achievement of the system's educational goals of reading and mathematics. Each school's administration—faculty and staff—collaboratively identifies school objectives, assesses school needs, plans specific strategies to meet needs, and identifies appropriate staff development functions relative to the accomplishment of individual school objectives. School teams, together with area personnel, evaluate the degree of improvement on each school objective prior to the development of the subsequent year's objective plan.

This system has forced teachers to talk to one another about student progress. The outcome is greater articulation between grades and schools. Everybody in school is made knowledgeable on what the goal is and what contribution is expected of each class and grade level.

In 1980 a new reporting tool was added to facilitate the discussion. Each basal reader at every grade level has a number of mastery levels, with the average basal having six to ten levels for one academic year. There is a publisher's mastery test for each level. Each month in the 1980-81 school year following the first quarter, teachers have indicated the levels completed by students. This report has been most helpful to teachers and administrators for grouping and for determining if too much time is being spent on certain sections. A number of students are scoring on tests at higher levels than they are placed in the readers.

Full-Day Kindergarten Program—In 1980 the full-day kindergarten program was implemented in the Atlanta public schools. The program is providing a great deal of flexibility for the classroom teacher in meeting each student's needs on an individual basis. Direct instruction and student-directed activities are provided for students on a planned basis in the areas of reading and mathematics. Performance objectives for prereading objectives have been developed, and records are maintained for placement purposes relative to first-grade placement.

Pupil Progression Policy—A Pupil Progression Policy for the elementary school level has been developed. This plan is consistent with the Elementary

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Curriculum Program strategies and procedures in that student progress is individualized and based on the mastery of identified skill indicators appropriate for the individual student's level of progress.

The Pupil Progression Policy ensures that each student progressing from the primary elementary level to the intermediate level will have mastered the required minimum skills and competences to benefit from the intermediate instructional programs.

In addition to the development of needed programs and the training of teachers to carry out these programs, we have tried to find ways to discuss matters more with teachers and to include them in seeking solutions to problems that confront us.

The major task asked of me by the Atlanta public school teachers is to react vigorously to the unjust criticism heaped on teachers by the media. For example, the cover story of the April 20 *Newsweek* was "The Flunking Public Schools." The cover showed a knotted pencil. It was all very dramatic, but unfair.

When I visit schools, I go at 7:30 A.M. to meet with the school staff. I am invariably able to determine growth items for which I can commend the staff. The thirty to forty minutes that I can spend talking with each member of the school staff is valuable to me in learning of the successes that they are enjoying and the frustrations they are experiencing. It takes me three years to visit all the schools, but in that span of time I get a good feel for how things are going in the schools. Teachers feel good about the increases in student achievement, and they fully embrace the goals of 20 percent this year and the national norm in five years. Atlanta public school teachers are believers. The challenge ahead is stability. Teachers will continue to perform, provided their jobs are not constantly threatened. The ball is in the Board of Education and administrative staff's court. Can we handle a reduction in pupil population without causing a great disruption from reduction-in-force and building-closing programs? We must answer the challenge in ways that ensure that pupil progress does not suffer.

Students

In our efforts to build a community of believers we turned to the students themselves for contributions toward creating this condition. We assumed that the 1985 goal of the national norm as well as the 20 percent goal would not come to pass if students themselves did not expect to reach them. School staff and community persons have a lot of influence on students' expectations, but students themselves may have even a greater influence on their own and their peer's expectations (Table 8).

In attempting to create community enthusiasm for the 1985 goal, a students' town meeting was held in October 1980 for student leaders of middle schools and high schools. I presented the challenge of the 20 percent goal and the long-term goal of the national norm in five years. I pledged the support of parents, business, and the religious communities. Board members and cabinet members (executive school staff) were presented to the students. They were then invited to make comments and ask questions.

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Table 8. Estimated Shifts in the Order of Influences on Youths 13 to 19 Years Old that Change Their Behavior

	1960	1980	
1	Mother, father	Friends, peers	(up 2)
2	Teachers	Mother, father	(down 1)
3	Friends, peers	*Television, radio, records, movies*	(up 5)
4	Ministers, priests, rabbis	Teachers	(down 2)
5	Youth club leaders, counselors, advisers, scoutmasters, coaches, librarians	*Popular heroes, idols in sports and music*	(up 1)
6	Popular heroes, idols in sports and music	Ministers, priests, rabbis	(down 2)
7	Grandparents, uncles, aunts	*Newspapers, magazines*	(up 2)
8	Television, records, radio, movies	*Advertising*	(up 2)
9	Newspapers, magazines	Youth club leaders, counselors, advisers, scoutmasters, coaches, librarians	(down 4)
10	Advertising	Grandparents, uncles, aunts	(down 3)

*Johnston Company, synthesis of eighteen studies for youth and values-oriented clients, 1954-80

The questions flew thick and fast. I fielded the questions to the proper Board member or cabinet member. After one hour I realized all the questions could not be answered; I therefore asked the students to put them in writing, and I would see that they were answered. Some sixty questions were turned in.

These student leaders pledged that they would go back to their schools and work for the 20 percent goal and the national norm in five years. They further promised to return to a meeting in March 1981, at which time I would report on staff's progress in securing the support of the goals by parents, business, and the religious community.

Another means of reinforcing students' commitment to the goals has been for me and other staff members to go to schools to appear at assembly programs. At the beginning of the school year I sent middle-school and high-school principals a list of dates when I would be available for assemblies. So far I have spoken to all ten middle schools and eleven high-school student bodies. At each assembly program I reviewed the achievement progress of students at that school, restated the goals, and talked about the tasks that students must undertake if they are to be successful. I then answered questions about the goals and other student concerns. Principals report to me that this type of assembly is helpful in motivating students to improve their performances.

At the March 1981 town meeting with students I reported on the town meetings with parents, business representatives, and religious leaders. This information was well received by the students. They in turn reported on programs they had conducted at their own schools. They expressed their satisfactions as well as their frustrations in conducting their motivational programs. Some of their frustrations were related to the lack of staff support. These problems were referred to the appropriate cabinet member for follow-up.

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Again, we responded to questions for more than one hour. Board members and cabinet members came away from this meeting as excited as they did after the first. We feel most students are members of the believing community and that we will reach and exceed the national norm in five years.

Parent Involvement

We believe in Atlanta that strong parent involvement in the day-to-day activities of the school will improve student achievement. Each year, when asked how they plan to involve parents, most local schools identify the Parent-Teacher and the Parent-Teacher-Student associations (PTA and PTSA) as the major vehicles of parent involvement.

During the more than twenty years of desegregation the PTA units lost members, and in some schools the units stopped functioning. In 1973 there were still separate PTA councils for blacks and whites, although the state and national organizations had merged.

The efforts at merging in Atlanta did not meet with early success. The black PTA council insisted on its identity and tended to disappear gradually, with the result that PTA membership diminished sharply. At the same time, the white PTA members, who were the backbone of the Atlanta Council, tended to drift away as their children graduated.

The PTA leadership did not despair and, in fact, began to reverse the membership loss in 1976. In 1980 PTA enjoyed a membership increase of two thousand, one of the greatest increases in the nation. Because most of the revitalized PTA members are employed, almost all activities occur in the evening. They take on the hard problems of low achievement, educational politics, health, teenage pregnancy, venereal disease, and so on. A new bond is developing between parents and school staff in the mutual effort of helping children to succeed. Staff are learning that parents with limited education and resources will demand greater school success. Parents are learning organizational skills in PTA, and they use them in working with or opposing staff. Most important, voluntarism is growing again in the schools. Parents are in the school regardless of the income level of the school community.

PTA is growing in Atlanta, not only because of the hard work of PTA members, but also because staff are working with and encouraging PTA at all levels. Principals attend Council and regional meetings, and cabinet members, all of whom are PTA members, set the pace by being present at these meetings.

A new parent organization, the Northside Parents Association, was organized by parents of children in predominantly white neighborhoods. This organization's express purpose was to stop white flight from the schools by assuring quality education in these schools. With the support and assistance of school staff, Northside parents conducted education fairs at schools and shopping centers in an attempt to sell their neighbors and friends on public schools. In the process of selling others, the Northside parents reinforced their own beliefs in public schools, and those of the school staffs in their mission.

Over the years we have encouraged PTA and other parent organizations to learn as much as possible about the operations of the school system so that they can share accurate information on the school system with others. Usually there

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is a report on accomplishments given by a person from a different school work unit at each meeting. The school budget is reviewed at a Council meeting before adoption by the Board of Education, so that PTA representatives are prepared to appear before the Board on special budgeting concerns.

The Atlanta PTA has thirteen thousand members and continues to grow. It is the largest volunteer organization that works regularly with the schools. It, too, is a believer in Atlanta's children and schools.

Town Meetings

Three town meetings were held in the fall of 1980 to discuss the factors critical to the 1985 goals. Those factors include: criteria for keeping schools open; alternative education; graduation requirements; determining roles of key persons relative to students achieving the national norm in literacy skills; magnet schools; system interface with job market; reporting pupil progress; pupil transportation; evaluation of staff and instruction; and "wild card" sessions for unidentified topics that community members wished to discuss.

Each small group session was chaired by a community member, and staff members served as recorders. Summary reports on recommendations were given in *Connection*, the school system's newspaper, published six times each year and distributed to one hundred thousand persons.

Approximately two thousand persons participated in the three town meetings, and they affirmed the goals of 20 percent for fiscal year 1981 and the national norm by 1985. They touched on concerns such as transportation, which was not functioning as smoothly as desired, and school closings, but they realized cutbacks over the next five years will be necessary. Parents asked for assistance in developing skills in assisting their children to reach the goals. Parents who attended the town meetings demonstrated that parents not only want more for their children, but also that they believe in their children's abilities to learn.

Media, Higher Education, and Business Representatives Becoming Believers

In October 1980 we held a luncheon for the chief executive officers of the several broadcast and news media organizations. Various reports on achievement were distributed, and the plans for the school year and for the next five years were described. After answering their questions on the issues, we requested their help and cooperation both in enlightening the public about the factors vital to the system's five-year goal of achieving the national norm and in reporting accurately all Atlanta public schools news.

The news and broadcast media seemed excited about the goals, and to a person pledged support in publicizing the goals. At some time throughout the school year all the media have done something special in a positive way on the school system, with the greatest contribution being made by WSB-Channel 2, Atlanta's more popular TV station by showing an hour-long program at 8:00 P.M. on a Friday evening. This program was narrated by one of Atlanta's most popular news commentators and was designed to highlight student accomplish-

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ments. Media representatives are helping Atlantans to become believers. The WSB general manager stated recently that he was overwhelmed by the amount of mail he has received commending the station for the program. A follow-up luncheon with media representatives was held in May with the Board of Education and the administration to review the outcomes of the year.

Higher Education

There has been a close tie between higher education and the Atlanta public schools for several years. Each month the deans of the schools of education and school executives meet at breakfast and talk about happenings at their respective institutions. Further, we discuss how we can help one another. These informal discussions have led to such programs as exchanges of principals and professors, collaboration in seeking funds for programs, Atlanta University taking over the substitute teacher program in one area of the school system, and the development of joint programs such as a summer school for the gifted, which is operated in an Atlanta public school but attracts students from the metropolitan area. There is a full-time staff, but students from the several colleges and universities receive their clinical training at the one center. We have developed a sense of trust that allows this quality program to be provided students.

The Atlanta public school friends from higher education have become full partners with Atlanta public school staff in cultivating the business and religious communities to become believers.

Business Community

A partnership of higher education, the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, and the Atlanta public schools was formed at a town meeting for 200 business, industrial, political, and educational leaders in January 1981. Governor George Busbee, in greeting the group, said, "I want to thank all of you for allowing me to share in a moment of great promise for the city of Atlanta and the great state of Georgia. I enthusiastically endorse the partnership which is represented here." Frank Smith, vice-president of the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce said, "Talk about those things that you can do or that you would like to do to help public education in Atlanta." Dr. Michael Mescon of Georgia State University, the first professor of private enterprise in America, said, "We as a nation are satisfied to just get by, not because we don't have the wits or are not smart enough; but what is lacking is commitment, the willingness to do what has to be done. We have an opportunity to indicate that the commitment is present and that this community is willing and prepared to close that monumental gap that often exists between mouth and movement."

At the conclusion of the meeting, 100 of the 200 executives committed their organizations to assist the Atlanta public schools. Several weeks later a second meeting was held with those representatives or their designees to effect the relationship between the business organization and a school or work unit in the school system. Business, industry, and government had not only become believers in education, but they also have become producers of education.

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Religious Leaders

The school system has been accustomed to working with representatives from higher education and business but has had little contact with representatives from the religious community. Before convening a meeting for the religious community, a fourteen-member steering committee of clergy from various denominations and faiths was formed. The committee was instrumental in shaping the direction of the program, which started out as being one for improving communication with the school system and expanding the base for child advocacy.

Equal numbers of religious leaders and school staff, primarily principals, attended the meeting, and some of the suggestions resulting from the meeting included important school announcements (such as immunization information) in church bulletins, Big Brother and Big Sister programs, Adopt-a-School, tutors for reading, and providing child shelter for latchkey children.

After the meeting the steering committee continued to meet and formulate programs, resulting in a religious community commitment to provide child shelter for latchkey children this summer in the twenty-six public housing locations in the city. The budget for this program is more than $500,000. Indeed, the religious community has become a believer.

In May 1981 all the members of the partnership were informed that the Atlanta public school students realized the first-year goal of a 20 percent gain, or more than 35 percent students now scoring above the national norm in

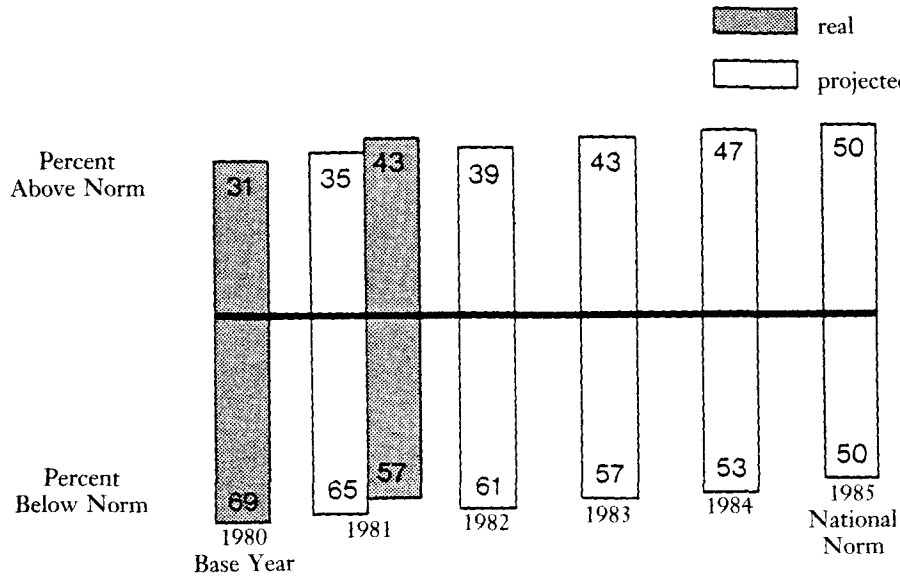

Figure 1. Projection toward National Norm for Atlanta Public Schools in Reading

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reading and mathematics measured by the CAT (California Achievement Test). Further, they were informed of the 1982 goal (Figures 1 and 2).

Our city has a long history of caring. Individuals, business, and organizations have consistently given of their time, talents, and money. It is hoped that with our organized partnership of the business community, Chamber of Commerce, religious community, and higher education, our students will directly benefit from the abundance of these educative agents and agencies.

In response to a request for their expertise, suggestions and know-how in establishing school programs have taken place. They have provided staff and have made tangible gifts after being asked specific requests. They are actually teaching on specific topics requested by classroom teachers. Their advice has been priceless, yet no bill for consultants' fees has been presented. For example, the banking community is setting up banking equipment in a school so that our students can learn how to use it. Ford Motor Company has offered motors for students to learn to repair. On-the-job training is taking place. Artists are teaching our elementary students. Some of their work is on loan at our school art galleries. Delta Air Lines presented a share of their stock to each of five students from Washington, Northside, Douglass, and Therrell high schools who were winners in a writing assignment. Attorneys are lecturing in social studies classes. Executives from the Coca Cola Company taught sixth-grade and seventh-grade students on a regular basis. Two churches have joined together in adopting a school.

Children in Atlanta are increasingly supported by a community of believers. They are regularly shown evidence that adults from all walks of life care about

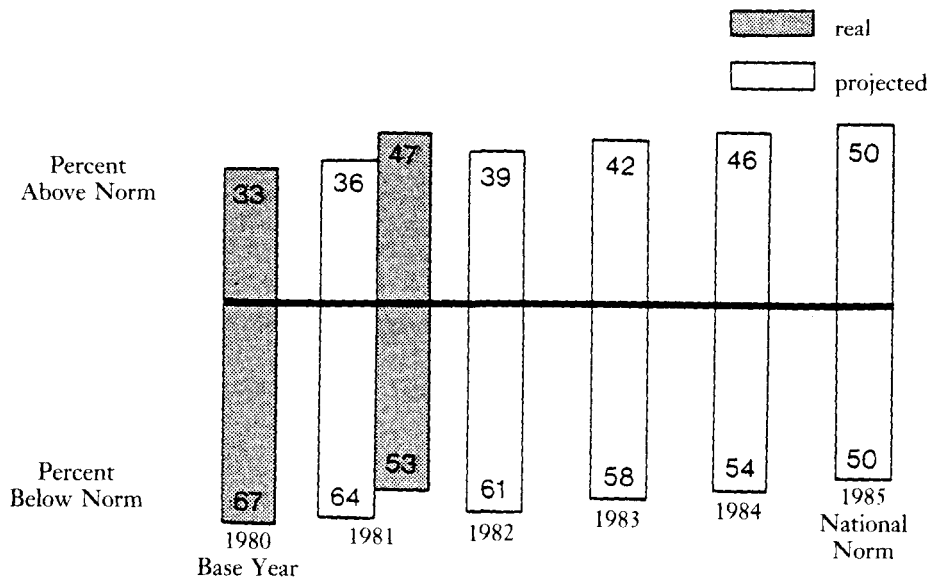

Figure 2. Projection toward National Norm for Atlanta Public Schools in Math

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them. Children are given more opportunities to express themselves on the goals and objectives that they set for themselves and that are established for them by others. Students are being challenged to succeed.

Atlanta is a city of believers in children.

Who will make the city joyful
  who will wipe away its tears?
Who will tell the children stories
  who will make their clear eyes gleam?

Maybe lawyers nursing tender flowers
  Businessmen exploring stars
Maybe those who listen to the children
Or beyond the other maybes
  Maybe you and maybe me.

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TIMOTHY S. HEALY

Belief and Teaching

THE PUBLICATION OF JAMES COLEMAN'S most recent report,[1] together with the Reagan Administration's tuition-tax-credit proposals, has brought the discussion of private and public schools and their respective merits to a new level of dispute. Since 90 percent of the nation's children are today enrolled in public schools, with only 10 percent in private institutions, most of them religiously based, there is good reason to ask why the latter have become so preoccupying. The answer, obviously, is that public education is on the defensive today in a way that it has rarely been; private education is being looked at with new critical awareness. In asking about student performance, student attitudes toward citizenship, the amount of work students do, the discipline they undergo, and the results of their attendance in private rather than public schools, Professor Coleman makes us aware that it is not enough to see the private and public educational "universes" in the way that was common when educational debate centered on other issues.

To focus on religious schools, to explore the strength and shape that such association gives to both teaching and learning, is therefore a reasonable enterprise. Many schools in America began as religious institutions, but a good number have abandoned their religious affiliations and now operate, in effect, as secular institutions. Others, however, high schools and colleges, have maintained their religious ties, judging the continued acceptance of their religious tradition to be as much a matter of educational as of theological polity. If many of the faculty and administrators in these institutions understand and share these religious traditions only "through a glass, darkly," their stubborn adherence to a tradition of faith argues to at least some generally perceived sense of rightness, and it is useful to interpret this stubbornness in educational as well as in ecclesiastical terms.

This essay will treat both high schools and colleges, considering the continuum that runs through the last two years of high school and the first two years of college in what is normally referred to as "general education." These years in the life of a young man or woman make a psychological whole. Between sixteen and twenty the young are avid to speculate, feel comfortable with generalities, crave overviews of complex areas and of diverse academic subject matters, and more than anything else seem to cherish the freedom to fly and fall without consequence or damage. These same four years, however, must also be used to provide students with a certain amount of advanced instrumentaliza-

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tion, both in language and in mathematics. They need to lay down the historic foundations upon which the rest of a young mind's intellectual development will eventually rise.

Within this context a speculative and partial answer will be sought to the question: What educational difference does it make if a school or college begins with and continues to hold a belief in God? The question needs to be placed in a historical frame. Seventeenth and eighteenth century founders of America's schools and colleges had a clear ecclesiastical purpose in mind. Schools were established to raise up generations of Christian youth to become God-fearing citizens, to serve either to form a learned ministry or to guarantee the orthodoxy of civil society. The high schools and colleges that have preserved their religious identification have seen it complicated by a growing secular purpose. Each such school has a corporate entity, and corporate status has been granted for the civil advantages that it brings. The new sense of civil and secular obligation recalls even religious schools to the need for an overwhelming concern with learning and its acceptance as the principal object of their being.

This essay will not discuss matters that are strictly ecclesiastical or pastoral, nor deal with the ministry of the Sacraments, preaching to the young, or even the formal religious counseling done by chaplains and other religious personnel who are employed at a school or college. All these are extensions of the work of a church, not of a school. The school may indeed house and foster such activity, but pastoral care has not for many years been the direct or major concern of religious schools and colleges. In like manner, except in the premises this paper accepts, there will be no discussion of formal theological teaching. Given my background, almost everything said is rooted in a Judeo-Christian understanding, indeed, in one that is rather specifically Roman Catholic. That is perhaps less limiting in this context than it might be, since the majority of private schools and colleges that have maintained their religious affiliation in the United States are in fact Roman Catholic.

This essay will speak principally to the theological base of educational thought in schools and colleges that have maintained their religious affiliation. The questions it will ask are all about education: How is the curriculum changed by religious association? How is the structure of the program shaped? What are the educational effects that can be looked for as a result of a basic religious commitment? Religious schools arouse deep emotional loyalties, connected not only with the continuance of a specific faith, but also, frequently, with the maintenance of a particular identity and tradition. Debate on such issues, while often intense, is not always edifying. Rather than attempt to ask why the religious base of a school or college matters, it may be useful to settle for the more limited question of why it matters educationally.

There are at least five basic religious ideas that must have a significant influence on a curriculum or indeed on a whole school. They include:

1. The classic and scholastic understanding that contemplation is the highest destiny of man
2. The acceptance of the sacramental universe, as taught in both Christian and Hebrew scripture

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3. The understanding that theological instruction conditions a curriculum by its being as well as by its content
4. The search for oneness in knowledge that corresponds to the integrity of man's being
5. The premise that all education has a moral thrust, since there is a necessary tie between learning and conduct

* * *

Western tradition owes to the genius of Thomas Aquinas the wedding between Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* and Christian asceticism. Both present the ultimate aim of man, blessedness, as the full working of heart and mind in loving contemplation of their worthiest and most satisfying object.[2] St. Thomas goes further than Artistotle in his constant emphasis on the supremacy of intellect over the will in this contemplation.[3] He makes clear that the activity of which Aristotle speaks is contemplation, and that its object is God, and here on earth, God as revealed. As so frequently happens, this abstract statement has immediate and practical consequences.

If contemplation and love are seen as the only activities of man that span both time and eternity, then education must necessarily concern itself with man's mind and heart. In Catholic schools the Thomistic accent on intelligence has always provided a clear mandate for knowing, so clear, in fact, that it has led some Catholic schools to substitute knowing for loving, as by far the easier option. Religious schools have usually felt considerably more comfortable in a contemplative than in an active world; traditional liberal arts and sciences have appealed more than career-oriented programs that "turn the wheel and look to windward." Contemplation is of course possible in the arts and the sciences but is somewhat more difficult in the social sciences, and may be close to impossible in such areas as engineering and business. Because of its base in both the *Nichomachean Ethics* and in the *Summa Theologica*, any religious high school or college will generally feel more comfortable with studies that lead directly or indirectly to contemplation. This applies even to the processes of teaching and learning:

> then intellect, too, I repeat, has its beauty. . . . To open the mind, to correct it, to refine it, to enable it to know, and to digest, master, rule, and use its knowledge, to give it power over its own faculties, application, flexibility, method, critical exactness, sagacity, resource, address, eloquent expression, is an object as intelligible (for here we are inquiring, not what the object of a Liberal Education is worth, nor what use the Church makes of it, but what it is in itself), I say, an object as intelligible as the cultivation of virtue, while, at the same time, it is absolutely distinct from it.[4]

The Aristotelian ideal emphasizes liberal education; it is scarcely surprising that it is considerably more comfortable with a focus that gives primacy to classical works rather than to modern creations. The Jesuits of the seventeenth century who did so much to shape all secondary education sensed that this classical focus had a strength far beyond their more highly advertised intention of making *eloquentia latina* useful. Since then, religious schools have generally

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chosen to advance the classical liberal arts curriculum, either in Latin and Greek or in modern languages. The world of classical antiquity, and the arts and institutions that grew out of it, have left us principally works of philosophy, history, law, and literature. All these led to a curriculum that emphasizes language and verbal skills.

The "classics" fit a religious disposition perfectly. Apart from their completeness and their intrinsic beauty, so satisfying to the believing mind, they provide a distancing from the useful and noncontemplative reality that religious schools regard as essentially distracting. Also, the classics bring to the young a lesson that is otherwise rarely acquired, the sure and certain knowledge that great civilizations, however rich in beauty and power, can perish from the earth. While the preacher may say, "Here we have no lasting city," the schoolmaster may ask, "Where is the glory that was Greece?" The classical curriculum is attractive precisely because it offers a mesh of rules and forms that have influenced, perhaps exaggeratedly so, later literary and historical generations. This strict sense of form has more than historical value; it recalls both Thomistic and Aristotelian canons. Objects have shape because they come from the mind of God. They can be contemplated precisely because man's mind derives from the same source, and indeed works best if it knows both seed and shape in those things it contemplates.

This sense of the pervasive importance of shape makes the Aristotelian ideal of contemplation significant not only for the curriculum itself, but also for the way in which all material is presented. Contemplation is a habit learned individually, not in groups. The faculty that presents it must model it no less than talk about it; this involves individual and immediate presence. Religious schools look to the faculty to counsel and advise, to translate curriculum into growth, and to do this without being overwhelmed by the confusions of adolescence. No one else can do this work, for it presumes sympathy for the student who is seeking help, as well as a sure and subtle grasp of the basic ideas that shape the curriculum and that provide both form and substance for student and teacher alike. The American academic invention "student personnel" will always be suspect within any serious religious school environment. Intermediaries of any kind will block or distort education; they cannot facilitate talk and learning.

In a contemplative curriculum a major concentration on any one field of study establishes a measuring rod deeply embedded within a student's consciousness, by which he can forever after distinguish between knowledge and ignorance because he has had a direct experience of how developed knowledge feels. Its design bears very little relation to careers, to the grim business of earning a living. It is intended to foster discrimination, to reduce arrogance, and to curb the threat of energetic folly.

Aquinas, Aristotle, and their ideas of contemplation lead even to material conclusions. The school that recognizes that contemplation is valid both in time and in eternity must allow, and indeed strive to create for its students, times of peace, islands of grace, places of quiet. The campus must be more than an agreeable collection of buildings, much more than a kind of gramineous "portfolio." Its beauty will derive neither from embellishment nor from distraction. Beauty is the setting in which contemplation is possible; in the

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twentieth century it may be the only door remaining into the quiet that all contemplation requires.

The second conviction that religious schools share is that the universe is by nature "sacramental," that it symbolizes and reveals its Creator. The formulation is perhaps unfortunate in that it can lead so quickly to speculation about theology in a professorial manner. It can also, unfortunately, draw many into a point-by-point comparison that makes so many nineteenth century commentators on Christian parables tiresome: the "universe as textbook" approach to theologizing. It would be comfortable and fun if it worked, but it never has and almost certainly never will. Despite Hopkins's "There lives the dearest freshness deep down things," it is very difficult to read natural phenomena in theological terms. The arguments that do so usually limp badly. On the other hand, there is a vision, instinct to the historical books of the Hebrew scriptures and also present in the gospels, that revelation "rides time like a river." In this sense, Chaucer's insight that the acts and movements of a pilgrimage to Canterbury mirror the acts and movements of man on his way to eternity is healthy and suggestive. Chaucer lifts us into the world of symbols where even modern man can reach for God; he steers us away from the jog-trot of allegory that, perhaps unfairly, must strike moderns as somewhat trifling. In considering symbol and avoiding allegory we echo Yeats: "A symbol is indeed the only possible expression of some invisible essence, a transparent lamp about a spiritual flame; while allegory is one of many possible representations of an embodied thing, or familiar principle, and belongs to fancy and not to imagination: the one is a revelation, the other an amusement."[5] Religious schools strain to teach reality as laden with symbols "which express and mediate God's self-communication."[6] As soon as we turn to the educational value of this symbolic view of the universe, we enter on ground well mapped by Paul Tillich,[7] perhaps even more fully explored by Father Avery Dulles.[8] Their theological insights are immensely useful when applied to the somewhat more mundane world of education.

Teachers in their work are conscious of the three classic effects of symbols. The first is that the symbol has a deeply transforming effect on the individual who understands it; he is involved, possibly committed, but certainly held in a state of tension far higher than mere intellectual fascination. There is no way in which symbolic understanding can be read as purely cognitive, either for individual or community. Any symbolic understanding of the world leads an educational community directly toward commitment.

The second educational effect of a symbolic view is that, beyond involving the mind, it engages the imagination in the work of symbolic interpretation. Symbols work when their "skeined, stained, veined variety" becomes evident to us. This can only happen when the imagination is deeply involved, and the "trilling wire in the blood" that ties mind to imagination is strummed until it sings.

Finally, for both teacher and student, symbols serve as a path into a synthetic and unitive approach that reveals "a perspective in which heterogeneous realities are susceptible of articulation into a whole."[9] A great weakness of all our schools is that we present to students the technical and artistic

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fragmentation of the late twentieth century so thoroughly that we dampen their zeal to work toward some kind of integration. If we take a symbolic view of the universe, we can settle for integration as the norm and fragmentation as the painful exception.

All through the twentieth century the notion that "revelation is given in the form of ideas that can be adequately expressed in propositional speech—that is to say, in conceptual language that is amenable to syllogistic logic"[10]—has been under steady attack. Most modern theologians acknowledge that theology involves history, symbols, and dialectics no less than propositions. Churches and synagogues have, however, over many centuries chosen to adopt sets of formulae or creeds that are open to theological interpretation, and thus a religious school must make place for that kind of formal theological instruction that can find its way honestly and of right into the curriculum. The religious tradition behind each school will determine the creed that is presented, although in both high school and college it should not be presented as inculcation or indeed as leading primarily to religious faith.

Historically, religious schools have felt strongly about this teaching. The ecumenical thrust of modern theological reflection will find some place in religious high schools and a far greater one in religious colleges. The American experience in religious education has made such schools far more open to diversity than those in other nations or, indeed, than those in America would have been in the past.

Theology in the curriculum accomplishes several goods by the mere fact of its existence. American religious schools and colleges have in the past been confronted by a number of unsatisfactory absolutes; mathematics, art, science, and even athletics have contended for the honors. Whenever a formal department of theology is present, other absolutes are implicitly and explicitly challenged. Put an Everest in Massachusetts, and the Berkshires are reminded of their true height.

This does not imply that all religious or theological questions must be relegated to departments of theology. Where theology is an integral part of the school or college curriculum, teachers will talk with their colleagues in other departments, and do so with more authority and ease than they might if their subject was the part-time responsibility of some hard-worked chaplain whose major task was largely pastoral. Through its teachers of religion a school or college may find it possible to let serious human questions reach across many disciplines. The very organization of the curriculum teaches by implication, at least, that profound human concerns are ultimately theological. Teilhard certainly implied this when he said that "nothing secular is less than sacred."

The heart and center of any religious school is its understanding that men and women are made in the image and likeness of God, and for this reason are both intelligent and free. Religious schools in the past, and sometimes in the present, may sometimes forget this second element in God's image and likeness, which has to do with freedom. Theological teaching by rote, imposition, or arrogance will quickly turn into indoctrination; this is a monstrous distortion of everything that religious schools and colleges stand for. No substantial religious tradition will accept any understanding of faith that denies freedom, that

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neglects to see faith as a loving gift. Schoolmen have fought for their freedom within churches for centuries. When churches turn repressive, goliards arise, in medieval or modern dress, to mock and flay, to scourge and harry. In the steady dialogue that maintains any church, its academics have the edge of literacy.

The abstraction "the unity of knowledge," corresponding as it does to the equally abstract "the integrity of man," is an obvious goal for all liberal education, but just as obviously a difficult one to achieve. To the extent that formal theological studies are integrative, they are useful in binding together the disparate parts of any curriculum. An overexposure to theology can, however, lock the curriculum into a too-rigid schematization.

> the humane system of education presupposes a sort of ascension of the mind from the concrete to the abstract; from the real to the ideal; from art to science, from science to philosophy, from philosophy to religion; from the infinitely varied and multiple to the "one." In each level of reality the mind discovers the same fundamental pattern of harmony, which is simply the seal of the Divine Reason.[11]

Most religious-based schools would not wish to go this far. On the other hand, they would desire to point out to their secular brethren that the total departmentalization of all teaching is unhealthy for general education. It contributes to a lockstep rigidity, not wholly unlike the old chain of being that led to theology as "queen of the sciences." When a purely administrative convenience begins to condition thought, when a departmental structure leads to fragmentation, to the mincing of students, there is real educational loss.

The four years of general education need to be seen as "predepartmental." These are speculative years, a time for generalization and broad-ranging questions, the native ground of imaginative survey courses. These surveys ought not to be enticements to departmental allegiance; they are maps of complex territories. Young minds between sixteen and twenty more than anything else need to see breadth and need to gain confidence in their capacity to deal with complicated subject matters. While none of this argues for a religious foundation for a school or college, and while cross-disciplinary possibilities exist in many areas, theology is an exemplary subject in this regard. Serious teaching about God must reflect an integrative understanding; all "high seriousness" is ultimately theological.

A belief in God makes impossible the acceptance of the total self-sufficiency of any one area of human knowledge, much less of a limited academic discipline. Theology, while recognizing the validity of all those structures that in schools and colleges serve the growth of learning, must also, by its mere existence, deny their completeness. Dom Jean Leclercq understands correctly the relation between religious and secular learning when he says that "eschatological humanism does not exclude the historical humanism which seeks in the writings of the past lessons capable of contributing to man's harmonious development."[12] Yet he would never think to argue that historical humanism might one day replace the eschatological.

An institution may teach more by what it does than by what it proclaims. The makeup and rhythm of the curriculum can have deep meaning for those who know how to interpret it. It is a distortion for even the most learned and

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advanced of faculties to claim autonomy and self-sufficiency for the essentially closed universe of an academic department. Each of the convictions I have dealt with—the focus on contemplation, the sacramental nature of the universe, and the importance of formal theological teaching—all move in the direction of at least two years of high school and two years of college preoccupied with how knowledge is one, not how it is disparate.

These years are not necessarily the time when any large conclusions are reached. The "oneness" about which theologians talk is not an achieved synthesis, which comes, if at all, much later. If all synthetic teaching is ignored in these years, however, the later ones are doomed to almost certain sterility.

Another way in which man is one is in the unity of body and mind—of flesh and spirit. G. K. Chesterton liked to argue that it was a far greater heresy to deny the body than to deny the soul. Though Jesuits have expatiated on the idea *mens sana in corpore sano*, in practice, even in Catholic schools, the principle is frequently ignored, particularly in two activities much distorted in American schools, art and athletics.

One of the givens of creation is that men and women come with bodies, and that it is perilous to ignore them. The first point at which institutions founded on a belief in God begin to address this duality in man—and no church has ever lost sight of man as dual—is in public worship, in the liturgy. Second in importance to liturgy is its gargantuan offspring, drama. Here also body and mind work together to create a mystery. As soon as the arts are touched, however, a host of problems present themselves. The arts, while obviously independent, offer very substantial challenges to educators who must seek to incorporate their meaning into a larger frame.

> Every great painter transcends the visible in his own way, makes visible the invisible. And if art assists self-representation and experience of the world, serves to open up, interpret, and lay bare our reality, is it then to remain simply dumb in regard to the ultimate questions concerning this reality? Should it not again become more clearly involved precisely in the great questions of the sense or nonsense of life?[13]

The weakness of much of what our schools and colleges teach, particularly when what they teach leads principally to the acquisition of a license, is that we substitute process for product. With art we have not even done this. Not only have we lost the voice of art, but we have lost process as well. Except for a small number of conservatory and studio courses (offered rarely in high schools and not more frequently in colleges), all of our teaching deals with art principally as product. Students learn to recognize schools, movements, epochs, and developments. They are led to understand how one movement drifts into another, how one dramatist may set the stage for his followers. Rarely are they asked to dig into the resistant stuff of paint and clay, let alone words. The arts have been rendered wholly intellectual; their fundamental character is denied.

The situation is not much better with athletics. Even religious schools have also lost the sense of man's duality that was once widely grasped. They have lost the idea that all games and sport are religious, civic, and moral exercises, as the Greeks first understood them to be. They no longer see, as the Greeks did, that by using the body to make beauty, we condition the soul to understand and love it. The making of such beauty for the Greeks was a profoundly moral operation

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that mirrored society under stress, reflected honor on its rulers, and both instructed and raised to a passing glory the individual young athlete.[14] Pindar expressed his understanding of the meaning of athletic contests when he wrote, "Trial is the true test of mortal men."[15]

In this ancient, indeed religious view of athletics, whose purpose is considerably more than running down the libido of hyperactive adolescents, two modern needs are directly addressed. The first is the clear socialization that inevitably results from the discipline that conditions one's body as well as pulling together many into a team. The second is the profound integration of body and soul that makes so much sense for an education (and a religious faith) based on the incarnation. If athletics makes beauty, Hopkins's comment about "how meet mortal beauty" becomes immensely significant to teachers. Beauty, Hopkins writes, "keeps our wits warm to the things that are."

The oldest definition of any exemplary high school or liberal arts college is that it seeks to make good citizens. The making of citizens, although obviously a secular task, is one deeply influenced by belief in God. If we learned "the making of citizens" from the Greeks, they instructed us also in the principle that "you can't teach virtue." That adage, like another that says "you can't legislate morality," is bandied about by those who object to the idea of virtue precisely because it seems to carry with it, as its inevitable concomitant, sin. Yet civilizations for centuries have taught specific virtues and practices they deemed important; they have even led young people to interiorize and live them. Although they were never a fixed item in the curriculum, few imagined that they had no place in the classroom. The Greeks understood that virtue could not be taught and that knowledge was not virtue, a truism familiar to every learned and sinful man and woman. Still, this did not imply that the young could not be led to recognize virtue, understand it, accept it, and indeed live it.

A commitment to moral value in religious high schools and colleges is at the base of their obvious nervousness in dealing with the social sciences. "Believing" schools aim to prepare young citizens for two cities, the city of man and the city of God. Most schools with religious traditions feel a certain disquiet about the way the social sciences deal with that second city. And indeed, given the aura of total (if temporary) infallibility that hovers over the work of social analysts, believing schools have reason for their reserve. Such schools, with their acceptance of a belief in God, recognize that it is not enough for students to know certain facts, to count, to invent systems and theories that explain man's political activity or society more generally. Their insistence is not only with discovering whether something "works," but also whether it is good or bad. Disciplinary arrogance has little appeal in such institutions. Life and death, right and wrong, legality itself, cannot be determined on economic grounds alone. Students, as creatures of God, are not encouraged to see their lives as harnessed to social determinism, whatever the superficial appeals of such doctrine. Finally, if being created in the image and likeness of God has meaning for freedom as well as for intelligence, students cannot be led to think of themselves as slaves to visceral urges and biological memories.

There is little in the traditions of either Judaism or Christianity that is more conspicuous than the insistence on the links between learning and conduct. The "justice of God," as it appears in the prophetic books of the Hebrew scriptures,

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is almost totally linked to what men do.[16] In Christian asceticism the whole thrust of *askesis* is toward choices that will help an individual to shape or reshape his life. The notion that love or understanding can be separated from conduct is wholly foreign to both teachers and mystics in each of these traditions.

Virtue, while rarely explicitly included in the school curriculum, can be taught in the classroom. Faculty members in schools that claim to believe in God are haunted by the thought that they are the principal models held up to the young. Students judge teachers with the disarming clarity of youth, less by what they say or write, and more by what they are. This need not suggest conformity, much less uniformity; either would frighten or incense the young. Rather, there is an obligation on the faculty in religious schools to look to themselves as adults who "in the prison of their days" give witness to human care, human and divine compassion, and who understand the *lacrimae rerum* of history as a partial revelation of God's dealings with man.

Teachers do not shape citizens for this time only; they are preparing men and women to live in the United States twenty to fifty years from now. That means that the world is being changed in the bones of its sons, as Robert Frost puts it, or in Alfred North Whitehead's terms, the republic is being remade year in and year out. The religious school or college adds to this essentially secular task the principle that virtue needs to be viewed as a religious reality. Judaism and Christianity have substantially extended the virtues as the Greeks and Romans originally presented them. The churches need to acknowledge that while the secular city is being remade in high school and college classrooms, so also is the city of God, at least as it exists on earth. Parallel to Whitehead's concern with the remaking of the republic is the constant remaking of the churches, day in and day out, no less surely in the bones of their believers. A high school or college that is conscious of this particular task may worry its bishop or its elders. For the school, however, this second remaking is scarcely less important than the first.

Are these several ideas, then, exclusive to schools built on a belief in God? Are they particularly appropriate only to them? Can secular humanism, civic religion, or simple common sense provide the same bundle of goods? The answer, in part, is that they can. There is nothing mysterious in applying a theological understanding to education. Although religious belief may condition and enhance education, it does not by itself create it. Harmonics does not change simply because it has its uses for hymns. What changes is accent, emphasis, a shading of process and meaning. This is the role specific to religious belief.

The religious accent on contemplation, with its important educational consequences, may be paralleled in many ways by the equally satisfactory secular concern with the "life of the mind." It would be fatuous, for example, to claim that the age-old respect for what is true and beautiful is simply a religious phenomenon. Still, in their focus on the individual, in their resistance to the total domination of professional models, and above all, in their refusal to see themselves as direct instruments of political purpose—even when that political purpose is defined as the general welfare—religious schools and colleges keep alive a more ancient tradition of learning. These traditional institutions cannot

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see putting the many before the one; they are not overly beguiled by the possibilities of problem-solving; the state is not the only appropriate channel for service to man or God.

In their devotion to the contemplative in its liberal expression, such institutions are better able to resist pressures toward utilitarianism. In adding to their own particular vision of "the intersection of the timeless with time," which gives hope of an ultimate blending of time and eternity, they contribute a great deal. While congratulating themselves on this strength, however, religious schools would do well to remember that their own freedom from a domination quite as rigid as secular humanism—theological orthodoxy—is due largely to the humanist revolution provoked in universities during the nineteenth century. Believing schools may imagine that they are best equipped to use their freedom in defense of liberal education; they owe some part of that freedom to their secular colleagues.

When we turn to the world of sacrament and symbol, we enter a far more ambiguous terrain. While secular humanism in universities and schools does not read all reality as symbol, there is justice in Bergson's remark that "intellect exhibits a congenital lack of comprehension for life." Art has always been symbolic, from the beginning.

> In Virgil's poetry everything participates in inner drama and reflects the poet's awareness of the stirrings within the souls of his characters and of the destiny inherent in the events. Everything—landscape, morning, evening, night, dress and arms, every gesture, movement and image becomes a symbol of the soul.[17]

We are most aware of this symbolic reach beyond the face of nature and even of man when we come to criticism.

> The one who sets himself the goal of discovering the significance of poetic shapes and forms will always enter a realm where important phenomena defy reason. . . . Literary interpretation shares this problem with interpretation of all the arts and with those sciences which deal with manifestations of the soul and life. It must rely, therefore, on intuitive as well as rational understanding.[18]

This penetration below the surface of things is compelling for the modern critic; Dame Helen Gardner discovers

> a habit of mind of our age which shows itself in many ways, the looking for a hidden or a true meaning. The method of "mystical interpretation" could hardly any longer be said to be "alien and repellent to the modern mind." On the contrary it is plainly only too fascinating. The work of anthropologists studying primitive myths and rituals supports it, as does the work of psychoanalysts analyzing dreams by the interpretation of symbols. The efforts of philosophers constructing theories of symbolism, the discussion of the language of poetry as a symbolic language, and the conception that the work of art is a symbol, objectifying experiences which defy conceptual expression, have encouraged critics of literature to look below the surface of narratives or dramatic actions, and the thread of the discourse of a lyric, in an attempt to discover the realities which the writer is symbolizing, and find personal symbols or archetypal myths.[19]

Despite the common ground of symbolism on which both secular and religious critics stand, those who teach in a religious school are not precisely in

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the condition of their colleagues in overtly secular institutions. The numinous is always a person, a God who is at once creator, sustainer, and provider. In that sense, whenever this level of symbolic reality is touched, the believer comes very close to prayer. In this there is a sharp recall to the Renaissance and Reformation base of much of Christian spirituality, indeed of much religious schooling. One such sequence was based on the vision of Ignatius of Loyola, which reached as deeply into Protestant as into Catholic thinking. The notion of "God laboring in all things" echos through the educational reasoning of fundamentalists quite as much as it does among many "far-out" religious liberals.

When the unity and integrity of knowledge are considered, the situation becomes more complex. The religious understanding of "the whole man" has most often yielded to the demands of specialization, to the insistent priorities set by the so-called Germanic graduate school. The only advantage that the religiously based school has in this is that it will generally tend to enjoy some limited exemption from many modern orthodoxies, all of them either nonreligious or antireligious. Whatever conformity the Church used to impose in its universities and schools is mild compared to the absolutism that certain modern "scientific" scholars impose on education today. Procrustes is a no less painful host for being programmed by a computer.

At no place does the common ground between belief and unbelief seem larger today than in the moral sphere. The "back-to-basics" movement, for example, so popular today, has little to do with basic learning. Its real concern is behavior. If the Coleman report is correctly read, it provides notes to guide us in evaluating a school, in distinguishing between the good and the bad, and in predicting results for its pupils. The concern is as much with moral qualifications as with those that are purely intellectual. The Coleman study suggests that a high level of demand and a substantial keeping of discipline are almost as important as what is actually taught. Part of this is immanent to education itself.

> The problem of education, as Whitehead saw only too well, is not just that of contriving the initial romance, it is that of bringing about acceptance of the precision and discipline required to wed a person to a pursuit.[20]

A good bit of the basic moral stance that is today insisted upon is intended to lead beyond the school years into life itself.

Though they share much with secular schools, religiously based schools have two other distinctive features. They insist that morality is a personal achievement, based for Christians upon imitation, for both Christians and Jews on a law that has more than just human sanction. Although this may seem to be a superficial shading, since the preoccupation with "morality" can be translated easily into the rather more secularly oriented preoccupation with "ethics," the shading is real. Within religious schools this may lead to the presentation of a far more personally organized and articulated moral structure.

A second strength of religiously based schools derives from the conviction that all material reality is bestowed on an individual only in stewardship. The Scriptures echo this univocally. Whether the believer is Jew, Catholic, or Protestant, it takes little effort to translate what the Bible says about physical

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wealth into spiritual wealth. In that translation, all learning is recognized as having an immediate community or social dimension. Wealth is given to be used, to be used for more than merely individual good.

It is obviously extraordinarily difficult to draw fine lines between the outer limits of religious belief and the inner limits of secular humanism. There is a large area of shared ground. Still, schools and universities over time develop unique qualities, personalities of a distinctive character. It is wrong to ignore these. High schools and colleges do so much of what they do by their being; it is difficult to separate them from their work. The double vision that is called for was understood by Yeats, who wrote:

> Oh chestnut tree, great rooted blossomer
> Are you the leaf, the blossom or the bole?
> Oh body swayed to music, oh brightening glance,
> How can we know the dancer from the dance?

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